

LEAVING THE THEATRE

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LEAVING THE THEATRE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This much is clear: that in the absence of legislation establishing Canadian **content quotas** our movie theatres will remain in the hands of the Americans. But this **occupation** is little different in Paris or Berlin, Shanghai or Rio. And if Canadians have begun to leave the theatre it is only to warm ourselves by the soft glow of the raster at home, videotaped dupes of Hollywood **masters**. But another practise has existed alongside, of a cinema **without walls**, projections moved outside the stands of concessions and into store windows, steam screens, national parks and billboards. As old as the medium itself, these wandering sojourns have continued to mark film's public face. So why worry about **LEAVING THE THEATRE** now?

The theatrical exhibition of **avant-garde** film in Canada is clearly in a **crisis**. On one side waits an American media machine which has already turned the **visionary expressions** of the 60s into advertisements for handsoap, toothpaste, new age Beer and a better deodorant. On the other shore lies the **academy**, at present virtually the only group interested in watching the avant-garde. Roughly 95% of all avant-garde screenings in Canada roll inside the classroom. Beyond these **captive** audiences there is little interest and less room to move images some have termed the 'invisible' cinema, the 'un-cinema', the cinema of excrement and low flying birds, the immaterial cinema of materials, the reserved cinema of wildlife preservation or more simply 'Canadian' cinema. But perhaps it is too much to imagine that audiences will find their own way to the artist-run ghettos that dot the landscape, that it is our architecture, not our ideas, that have become redundant. Perhaps it's time to apply some of the **wild imaginations** of our making to **delivery systems** bent on a local exchange and expression, no longer content to go before or reach beyond, but to find ourselves again partner to a neighborhood dialogue. After **LEAVING THE THEATRE**.

LEAVING THE THEATRE

ROBERT EVERETT-GREEN

The
paradoxes
of
writing
music
for
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or
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posterity

As it happened,

that first summer of revolution coincided with the bright midday of what is now called classical music. When the mob attacked the Bastille, Mozart was at work on *Così fan Tutti*, a comic opera of interchangeable lovers whose happy ending consists of having their almost random yearnings corralled into an obviously empty social convention. It was not a work with which to toast the spirit of rational humanism.

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Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805) was the correct 'revolutionary' response. The heroine stood by her man, who stood against tyranny, along with a prison chorus that might have come straight from Louis' (or Napoleon's) jail. The clear goal was the universal fraternity celebrated in the *Symphony No. 9* (1823). Beethoven's singing multitudes personified the new ideal of the People, of which existing society stood only as a rough sketch. Upon this ideal, the basis and justification of every revolution since 1789, rose the notion of music written not to suit an occasion, but explicitly for posterity. The baffled public, a calamity in earlier times, became an acceptable phenomenon, since understanding would follow later.

performing arts: namely the dependence of radical innovators on the conservative habits of institutions. As the German musicologist Carl Dahlhaus explains in his recent book, *Schoenberg and the New Music*: "The possibility that pieces may be repeated years and decades later supports the decision to venture forward into the unknown. As long as music was subject to the constraint of having to be understood and accepted immediately, uncompromising newness was hardly possible." In other words, the advance of the new presupposes the existence of a music culture devoted to sustaining the old. With few exceptions, novel works are written in expectation that some day they, too, will enter the accepted canon.

So what remains in music of the revolutionary inheritance? A few composers, such as John Cage and R. Murray Schafer, still attempt to advance social change through their music and essays; and the ideal of an enlightened People of the future still hovers over the 'difficult' compositions of many others. But the path of formal innovation cleared in the name of that ideal has become heavily tangled, and 'avant-garde' a term of irony. The concert congregation that was to have been molded into the fraternity of the future has become notoriously placid and enamored of repetition.

In this environment, the bicentennial seems to have come too late. Musically, the event has not provoked anything like the creative response that might have occurred had the anniversary fallen in 1955, before the standard-bearers of 'the new music' saw their project fracture into divergent impulses that seem like so many instances (to borrow a phrase of Roland Barthes) of a

'retreat ahead' of society's relentless consumption of new languages.

In any case, it is obvious that the most successful musical revolution of recent years has had nothing to do with new forms of composition. In terms of reception, the period-performance movement may have done more in the past decade to change more people's hearing of concert music than all living composers combined. It might even be true to say that the moral vitality and faith in progress that animated earlier generations of composers has passed over into this movement; which, ironically enough, has spent no small effort restoring the music created for those undone by the events of July, 1789.

"THE POSSIBILITY THAT PIECES MAY BE REPEATED YEARS AND DECADES LATER SUPPORTS THE DECISION TO VENTURE FORWARD INTO THE UNKNOWN. AS LONG AS MUSIC WAS SUBJECT TO THE CONSTRAINT OF HAVING TO BE UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED IMMEDIATELY, UNCOMPROMISING NEWNESS WAS HARDLY POSSIBLE."

The way to enlightenment could be prepared, however, with polemics, so in due course, treatises on the mechanics of *le bon gout* (Francois Couperin) gave way to manifestos outlining the 'artwork of the future' (Richard Wagner), just as casual music criticism in letters (Mme de Sevigne) gave way to critiques in public journals (E.T.A. Hoffmann). As the public concert became institutionalized in the early nineteenth century, the listener was more and more expected to respond as though to a moral summons - to make himself a worthy recipient of the new communication. Vestiges of this cult of improvement have endured well into the twentieth century. Theodor Adorno paid undisguised homage to it when he wrote of Arnold Schoenberg in 1951: 'He honors the listener by not making any concessions to him'.

The service of this cult entails several paradoxes including one peculiar to the

There is also the more general paradox of what novelist Umberto Eco calls the 'aristocratic distance' assumed by the artist who writes for the ideal People and not the present audience - a paradox that provided fuel for a critique of the avant-garde from within. British composer Cornelius Cardew's slogan, 'Stockhausen Serves Imperialism', grew out of the conviction that the so-called radical composers of the 1950s had become makers of expensive consumer goods, since their music could only be understood with the benefit of considerable leisure and education. Like Hanns Eisler, a Marxist and one-time serialist, Cardew moved toward simplified, politically explicit workers' songs: music, indisputably, of the revolution. Unfortunately, these works are often musically indistinguishable from the preferred forms of the opposite camp, since only the words make the difference between a Maoist and a Fascist march.

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THE
BATTLE
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ANCIENTS
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OR
WHAT I
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TORONTO'S
INTERNA-
TIONAL
EXPERIMENTAL
FILM CONGRESS

WILLIAM WEES

THIS WAS WRITTEN ON THE TRAIN BACK TO MONTREAL AFTER EIGHT DAYS OF SCREENINGS, PANELS, PAPERS, AND CONVERSATION DEVOTED TO EXPERIMENTAL/AVANT-GARDE FILM. RATHER THAN RECORD WHAT HAPPENED DAY BY DAY, I WANTED TO COLLECT MY THOUGHTS ABOUT THE EVENT AS A WHOLE, AND PRODUCE SOMETHING LESS THAN A FULL REPORT,

BUT MORE THAN A MERELY PERSONAL IMPRESSION OF THAT PACKED AND EXHAUSTING WEEK AND A DAY.

WHILE I SHARED THE GENERAL GRATITUDE TOWARD THE ORGANIZERS FOR MAKING THE THING HAPPEN AT ALL, I ALSO FELT, AS DID MANY OTHERS, THAT THE CONGRESS DID NOT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW VOICES TO BE HEARD AND NEW FILMS

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to be seen, and that too many established figures of the North American avant-garde were given too much attention, both in screenings and panel discussions.

MANY TOOK IT AS SYMBOLIC that the first panel on the first day of the Congress was chaired by the epitome of the avant-garde critical establishment, Annette Michelson (who noted with pleasure the large number of present and former NYU students - meaning her students, of course - taking part in the Congress's panels and critics' sidebars: an NYU virus replicating itself throughout the body of the Congress?), and the first speaker on that panel was Fred Camper (one of Michelson's former students) who started by showing Brakhage's *Song XIII* and then reiterated the argument of his essay in the 20th anniversary issue of *Millennium Film Journal*, that the avant-garde is dying because so few filmmakers seem to have the artistry and deeply felt need to communicate which characterized the past masters of the avant-garde. The burden of the avant-garde's past accomplishments became increasingly apparent as the Congress progressed.

Examples? The Congress opened with a retrospective of Jack Chambers' films and closed with a retrospective of Hollis Frampton's films. The so-called 'Practica', in which a filmmaker was to talk shop about his/her filmmaking methods, were presented by David Rimmer, Robert Breer, Pat O'Neil, Stan Brakhage, and Joyce Wieland. Michael Snow and Brakhage (sitting side-by-side: the Yin/Yang of North American avant-garde film) were on one panel; Carolee Schneemann was on two panels.

AMONG THE THEMATIC screenings were abstract films of the 1920s and '30s; collage films by old timers like Robert Nelson, Bruce Conner, David Rimmer, and Standish Lawder (who curated the program and appeared to be unaware that collage and found footage films are among the most appealing forms of expression among younger experimental filmmakers - a few examples of which did turn up in other screenings); avant-garde films by women before 1970; a selection of 'Buried Treasures of the Avant-Garde', of which

the most recent was Amy Taubin's 1981 film *In the Bag*; a celebration of the body in film (another subject of intense interest among both theorists and practitioners of recent avant-garde film) which included old standards by Emschwiller, Brakhage, Broughton, and other works suitable to traditional modernist aesthetics - as Birgit Hein's program of erotic films by women demonstrated through counter-example (especially a film on cosmetic surgery using such graphic detail that some people fled the theater and many more were looking at the floor most of the time).

In other words, those who are comfortable with the history of avant-garde film and its mainstream modernism felt at home during much of the Congress; those who resent its hegemony did not.

BUT IT WAS NOT SIMPLY a question of old vs. new (as one speaker at a final wrap-up session pointed out by citing Barbara Hammer, who is 50 years old, as representative of the 'young' point of view). Rather, the Congress brought out the conflict between one way of thinking about the avant-garde, in which the making of 'art' is the presumed objective of the filmmaker, and another way - or an untidy pile of other ways - of thinking about the avant-garde in which issues of gender, race, economics, politics, mass media, popular culture, as well as personal expression and social commitment take precedence over 'art' (except as art can be made an object of analysis, criticism and sometimes open disdain due to its claims on truth and beauty). In addition, there are those for whom film itself is of little concern, and who saw no reason to take Christoph Janetzko to task when he introduced a panel on new technologies and the avant-garde by remarking that 'film is moribund' and that it is time to explore ways of advancing the goals of the avant-garde through newer electronic media, especially video and computers.

ALTHOUGH THE CONGRESS was enlivened by occasional skirmishes between the Ancients and the Moderns, the structure of the event as a whole tended to put the Ancients in the seats of power (on panels and in 'practica' as well as in individual and curated screenings), while the Moderns had to speak from the

floor much of the time and squeeze their films into late-night open screenings at the Rivoli, a bar-café with a backroom for showing films. At the Rivoli the atmosphere (in more senses than one) was reminiscent of the good old days of 'underground film' and more suited to the spirit of the Moderns than were the decorous afternoon and early evening screenings at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Yet, there was some justice in the complaint that the time, place, and format of the Rivoli screenings served to marginalize the Moderns (but then aren't true avant-gardes always at the margins?)

IT MUST BE SAID, however, that the structure of the Congress did allow the Moderns to be represented, though not as fully as they would have liked. Birgit Hein and Carolee Schneemann - both of whom, like Barbara Hammer, prove that youth was not required for membership among the Moderns - were on panels. Hein's screening of erotic films by women was the most liberated and disturbing screening of the Congress, and Abigail Child's *Mayhem*, shown before a panel on 'Vision and Language', generated some of the liveliest and most diverse interventions from the audience. The Moderns also cropped up in screenings devoted to recent films from Canada, the U.S., West Germany, the U.K., France, Eastern Europe, the Philippines and Brazil - though, like the thematic screenings, most of these programs also included work firmly rooted in the tradition of the Ancients. In addition, the voice of the Moderns was heard on some of the panels and, as I have noted, from the floor during discussions arising from panel presentations. But my lasting, overall impression (which I know a number of others shared) was that this Congress did not open its doors wide enough to let in as much fresh, disruptive, non-canonical work as many would have liked to see and have a chance to talk about.

NOTE: this is an abridged version of a paper published in the recent Film Studies Association of Canada Newsletter Summer 1989.

Page 3 photo of Barbara Hammer by Carl Brown.

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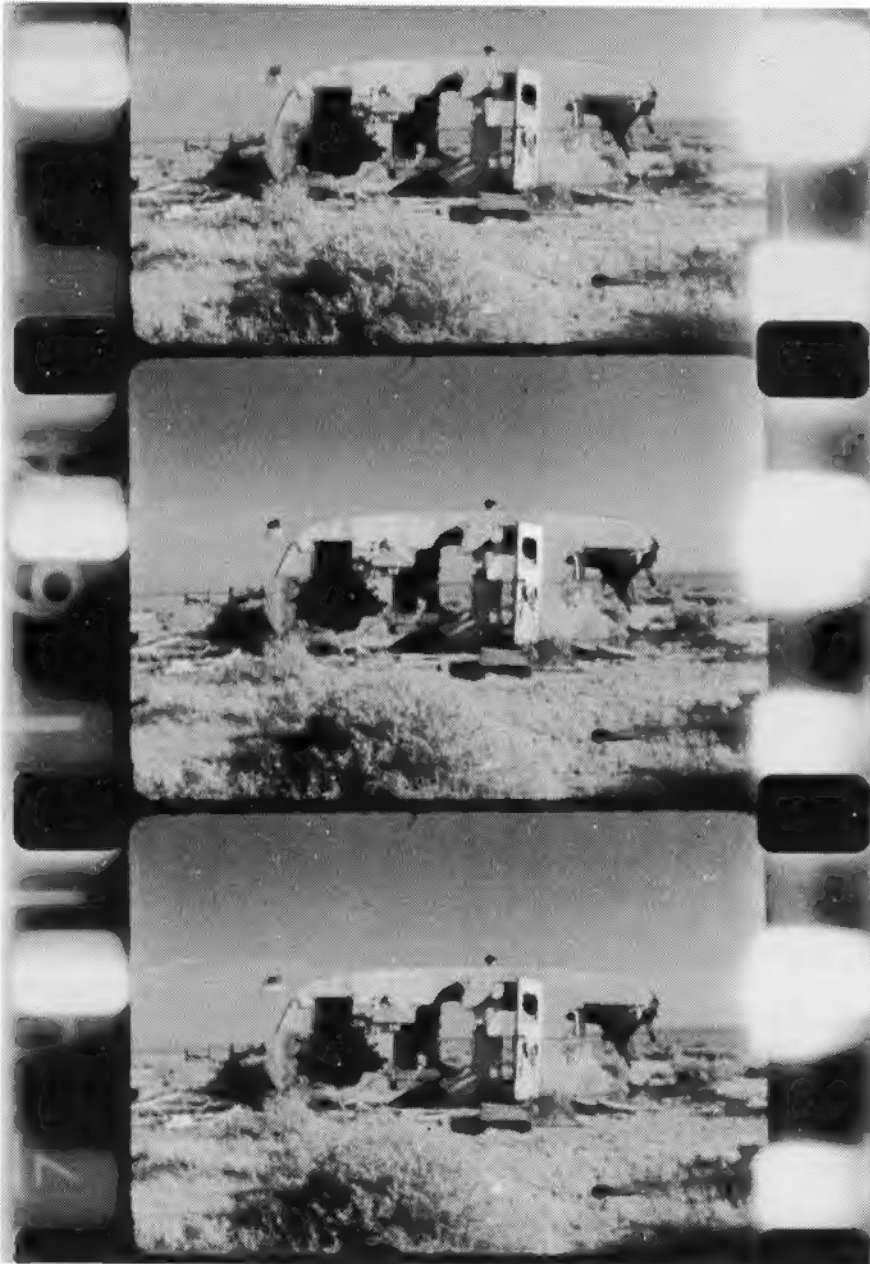
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CONFLICT

OF

INTERESTS

(SORT OF A REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL
FILM CONGRESS MAY 28 TO JUNE 4, 1989, TORONTO)
JANE EVANS



their clones - and, more importantly, films like *Last Days of Contrition* (Richard Kerr) which push that edge into a new generation.

But, other filmmakers and their films were there - within and without the official sanction. Some, in conflict with the canons, screened in the Open Screenings, or when pushed back there for political or temporal reasons, screened in the Alternative Screenings. They voiced their conflict at the microphones. They voiced over the canons. They added other layers.

*Conflict of graphic directions.
(Lines—either static or dynamic)*

But it should not be a question of knocking over gods. It is not a question of dying and death. It is a question of finding our own reality, our own experience... 'The search is the discovery'. (2)

So much talk at this Congress of the dying and death of avant-garde film. Such a bombastic idea - so denying of

change, of invention, of the adaptability of the artist.

The death I smelled in Toronto was the death of power - the power of the canons, of the canonized.

Avant-garde film is now in the hands of others too - women, blacks, natives.

*So, montage is conflict.
So, says Sergei Eisenstein.*

The International Experimental Film Congress was a montage of conflicts. The core structure of the Congress canonized the avant-garde film of the 50s and 60s. The films of Stan Brakhage and Bruce Elder were central - those of

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In the hands of change.
Some of these 'others' were not present
in Toronto.
The canon seems colourless and single
gendered.
For me that is a conflict.

*Conflict between an object and its
dimension.*

*Conflict of scales.
Conflict of volumes.*

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The last evening, we milled
about, exhausted, excited.
"The Work of Young Canadi-
ans" (curated by Janine March-
essault) had just screened. An
agitated film critic dripped at
my side. The last film, *Our
Marilyn* (Brenda Longfellow),
had driven him outdoors to
cool in the Toronto drizzle. He
said something about slashing
his wrists - about there having
been no reason for this film to
have been made.

SYNAPSE

I loved this film. I had decided
to program it. I liked it even
better on this my second
viewing. I floated on the waves
of editing - going the distance,
or not, with the two iconic
Marilyns (Bell & Monroe) who
had played major roles in my
perception of self. Several
more in this circle of critics
were astounded. They were
women too.

"Why?" we asked.
Sharply and with passion: "the
avant-garde filmmaker is
motivated by the conviction
that there is something
profound to communicate".

"Yes!" we nodded.

"It was too long, so long - it
pressed on me, oppressed me."

SYNAPSE

Those last words echoed. They had
come from my own mouth the first time I
had seen Elder's *Illuminated Texts* (not
programmed at the Congress but seen
earlier). Interesting... the blanketing by
ego is discomfiting when it is foreign.

A GENDER SYNAPSE.

Are there other gaps across which we do
not communicate well - over which our
understanding of a language fails?
Racial or regional perhaps?

Conflict of depths.

As in a river. That would be relative to
which river you're in and whether or not
it's mainstream. Even the avant-garde
seems to have a mainstream.

Conflict of masses.

Overheard: "Toronto eats their young!"
I had noticed - a strong competitive urge
to assert negative criticism.

Absolutes: absolutely terrible, absolutely
without reason.

Absolutes, absolutely always worry me.
Life truths tend to be grey or tinted -
seldom high contrast, black and white.
On the other hand, Karola Gramann
(Director of the Oberhausen Short Film
Festival) found the audience 'tolerant'.

Let me retreat, then, to my haven where
the arts community is less self-devour-
ing, sees strength in the unity of opposi-
tion to right-wing conservatism.

I stand on this side of a gap - defending
my position - and your right to yours.

My favorite films then:

At the very top, I place *Krakatau* (Mari-
usz Grzegorzec, Poland) - so powerful,
so beautiful, it pushed me to the edge
and left me there; the same reasons for
Kerr's *Last Days of Contrition*, and for
Jack Chambers' *Hart of London and
Hybrid*. For sensual pleasure I revelled
in Carolee Schneemann's *Fuses* and
Dog Star Man: Part 3 (Stan Brakhage)
as well as *Alaya* (Nathaniel Dorsky,
U.S.A.); Martine Rousset's *Mansfield, K*
because I share the same reverence for
blue and Rose Lowder's *Work in
Progress*, for its titillating impressionism -
just barely in motion; Moira Sweeney's
Imaginary II because it is truly erotic - it
is about those things which are sensory,
sensual and not male pornography
debunked, not about power or exploita-
tion.

I was also dazzled by Sweeney's new
film (sorry, I don't know the title) a
hypnotic journey from jewel to jewel; by
Penelope Buitenhuis's hard, punchy

sepia films, by Oliver Hockenhull's
Determinations. These last were
screened at the Open Screenings. Many
other images and sounds now fleet
through my consciousness remembered
from those screenings. They cannot be
named. The films shown there were
often not given adequate introduction,
separation or attention.

My cultural circuits overloaded.

By Sunday, the last day, I didn't want it to
end - but I couldn't bear any more. My
eyes refused to focus. My ears buzzed.

So much film, so many words, so many
connections - meeting the people whose
work I revere. New people, new film to
love. Discovering that beautiful film is not
always made by beautiful people - but
that it is, sometimes. I was honored to
meet Josephine Massarella (*One
Woman Waiting*) and Ellie Epp (*Trapline*)
whose films take up such space in my
consciousness. (Where were these films
in this Congress?) Stephan Sachs, a
young filmmaker from Dusseldorf whose
film I missed while retrieving a lost wallet.
I wish I had seen it - I loved what he had
to say about moving from a romantic
aesthetic to a fascistic one - a new
thinker, I think.

*Conflicts between an event and its
duration.*

All these things when I assemble them -
sandwich them together within one frame -
project the reality of the Congress - a
whole which was amazing. And yet,
because much of the best remains
outside the formal structure of the
Congress it will remain outside the
documentation.

It has been exposed but not processed.
For those who were not there, that's a
pity.

ITALIC INSERTS: *Sergei
Eisenstein, Film Form, Montage
and Conflict.*

(2) John Ferren, *Epitaph for an
Avant-Garde, Excerpts from Arts
(New York XXXIII, Nov. 2, 1958) 25.*

Photo: from Richard Kerr's *The Last
Days of Contrition*.

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MARTIN RUMSBY

THE FUTURE OF AN ILLUSION



THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL FILM CONGRESS HELD IN TORONTO IN LATE MAY AND EARLY JUNE, 1989, HAS PRECIPITATED AN UNPRECEDENTED CRISIS IN THE AVANT-GARDE CINEMA. BOUND BY THEIR INABILITY TO ADDRESS THE MOST PRESSING CONCERNS OF OUR TIME, AGED AND AGING MEMBERS OF THE AVANT-GARDE FILM COMMUNITY ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE ANNOUNCED, INSTEAD, THE DEATH OF CINEMA.

In an attempt to solve this crisis over 150 video and computer artists, itinerant film projectionists and film projection artists from around the world met for three days of round-table, closed-door discussions in St. Catharines, Ontario on July 8, 1989. The purpose of this meeting was to attempt to identify the major problems facing avant-garde cinema and to propose a course of action to resuscitate the failing vision of avant-garde filmmakers.

The following is extracted from the list of recommendations of this meeting, which were submitted to the governments of Canada and New Zealand. At the time of writing this report I understand that these proposals have been favourably received at the highest levels of the Canadian and New Zealand governments and that both nations are now working to enact legislation to bring these recommendations into law by 1995. As these measures could lead to a profound restructuring of film as we know it, I would urge all practicing filmmakers to carefully read and consider the following document.

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"IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT ALL THE FILMS THAT NEED TO BE MADE HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE. CINEMA WILL ONLY BE ELEVATED TO THE STATUS OF HIGH ART WHEN IT CEASES TO SERVE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE AND EXISTS SOLELY AS AN ARTIFACT. THE PROJECT OF CINEMA TODAY IS THE MOST URGENT AND COMPLETE ARCHAEOLOGY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF CINEMA. Such work can only be instigated under the patronage of enlightened government legislation and funding. Canadians pride themselves on their humane social legislation and forward thinking cultural policies. Clearly it is once again time for Canada to shine the beacon of Canadian enlightenment out to the civilized world. We therefore call upon the Government of Canada to enact legislation, under direct guidance from the Canada Council, to ensure the survival of the avant-garde cinema.

MEASURES THAT WILL BE ENACTED UNDER SUCH LEGISLATION INCLUDE:

- 1) THE IMMEDIATE DECLARATION OF THE ILLEGALITY OF ALL FILMMAKING ACTIVITY.
- 2) THE IMMEDIATE BANNING OF THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL SALE OF ALL FILM EQUIPMENT AND FILMSTOCKS.
- 3) THE IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF ALL FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL SUBSIDIES TO TELEFILM CANADA, THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA, AND ALL CANADIAN FILMMAKERS' CO-OPERATIVES. These moneys will instead be diverted, through the Canada Council, into the building of huge movie palaces, outdoor projection sites, film distribution centres, and fully equipped 16mm, 35mm, and 70mm mobile film projection units in Canada and, under Canadian Foreign Aid Programmes, around the world.
- 4) AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL HUMANE BANISHMENT SCHEME WILL BE SET UP BETWEEN CANADA AND A FRIENDLY 'RECIPIENT NATION'. We would tentatively submit the name of New Zealand for consideration as a most appropriate 'recipient nation'. Under this program the people of New

Zealand would regularly receive, for a twenty year period, huge cash payments from the people of Canada. In return New Zealand would be required to set up a systematic program, known as the 'Filmmaker Dispersal Scheme'. Under this program all alleged filmmakers (to be henceforth referred to as 'the film people') will be located in temporary refugee camps where they will be re-educated and gradually returned to society as lecture tour consultants, colour theorists, post-structural activists, travel agents and, of course, grant writers. Furthermore the New Zealand government will be asked to pledge to instigate and pass legislation to ensure that avant-garde filmmaking continues in New Zealand for ten years after it ceases to exist in North America, Europe and Japan.

Clearly the immediate cessation of all filmmaking activity and humane banishment of 'the film people' will lead to social and cultural upheaval across Canada. We would therefore recommend that along with the above measures an interim hierarchy be established to replace the now existent hierarchies of avant-garde cinema. Since they have long been regarded as the filmmaker's best friend we recommend that itinerant film projectionists and film projection artists be confirmed at the top of this hierarchy. We see two major advantages for selecting this group to head the revival and resuscitation of cinema:

- 1) FILMMAKERS WILL REALIZE THAT THEIR INTERESTS WILL BE BEST SERVED BY FILM PROJECTION ARTISTS. Filmmakers need only look to the long and distinguished history of itinerant film projection in all parts of the world, from Australia to Albania, Medicine Hat to Mongolia to realize their significant, and neglected, contribution to the development and furtherance of independent and regional cinemas worldwide. In Canada during the 1940s and 1950s, for example, the National Film Board hired Mary Woycenko, Dave Sharples and others to travel across the prairies showing films in

small communities. Sharples' work, in fact, led to the establishment of the Yorkton Short Film Festival in Saskatchewan, North America's longest running festival of independent cinema.

Even our suggested 'recipient nation', New Zealand, had its own pioneer travelling filmmaker/projectionist, Rudall Haywood. During the 1920s and 30s Haywood travelled from town to town in New Zealand with a standard script which would be adapted according to locale. In Whakatane, for example, he would use locals in, say, *The Girl from Whakatane*. One hundred or so miles down the road in Rotorua, however, the locals there would be filmed in *The Girl from Rotorua*. During each filming session Haywood would host a large banquet to which he would invite all of the town officials. Haywood would set up a movie camera at the dinner then secretly distribute itching powder amongst the guests. Once the dignitaries had worked themselves into a frenzy of itching and scratching Haywood would begin to film them. In this way Haywood could collect a series of cutaway shots which would be sure to please the locals when he returned a week later to show the film which he had since processed and edited in his mobile film truck. Plainly, Haywood's work demands painstaking attention and reworking by the new archaeologists and reconstructionists of cinema.

At a time when CINEPLEX and FAMOUS PLAYERS are opening new cinemas almost as fast as Hollywood releases feature films in Canada we are also witnessing the re-emergence of the itinerant film projectionist. One only needs to look to Film Trek in Ontario, Cinema Borealis in Chicago and to artists such as Wyne Geleynse, Charles Lyman and Phillip Barker to see that cinema remains healthy and continues to reinvent itself. Just as photography freed painting from the shackles of representation today video and computer art promises a new beginning for large-scale,

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cinema-specific outdoor projections. Taken to its natural end such projections posit a cinema without filmmakers and filmstocks.

2) ITINERANT FILM PROJECTIONISTS APPEAR TO BE DRIVEN BY A DIFFERENT SET OF ATTITUDES THAN THOSE WE ASSOCIATE WITH THE NOTORIOUSLY INDIVIDUALISTIC AVANT-GARDE FILMMAKERS. Film projection artists are united by a stronger social orientation than their filmmaking friends. Furthermore the very notion of projecting outdoors, in public places, is indicative of a desire to reach and communicate with an audience - a concern long since abandoned by avant-garde filmmakers. Popularist film projection artists will discover a public receptive to the new cinema hierarchy and this will, of course, minimize public anguish and outcry following the humane banishment of alleged avant-garde filmmakers.

We therefore call upon the Government of Canada to draft legislation which will ensure the end of avant-garde cinema. We firmly believe that once such legislation is enacted then governments throughout the civilized world will follow Canada's enlightened leadership and will then devise similar policies.

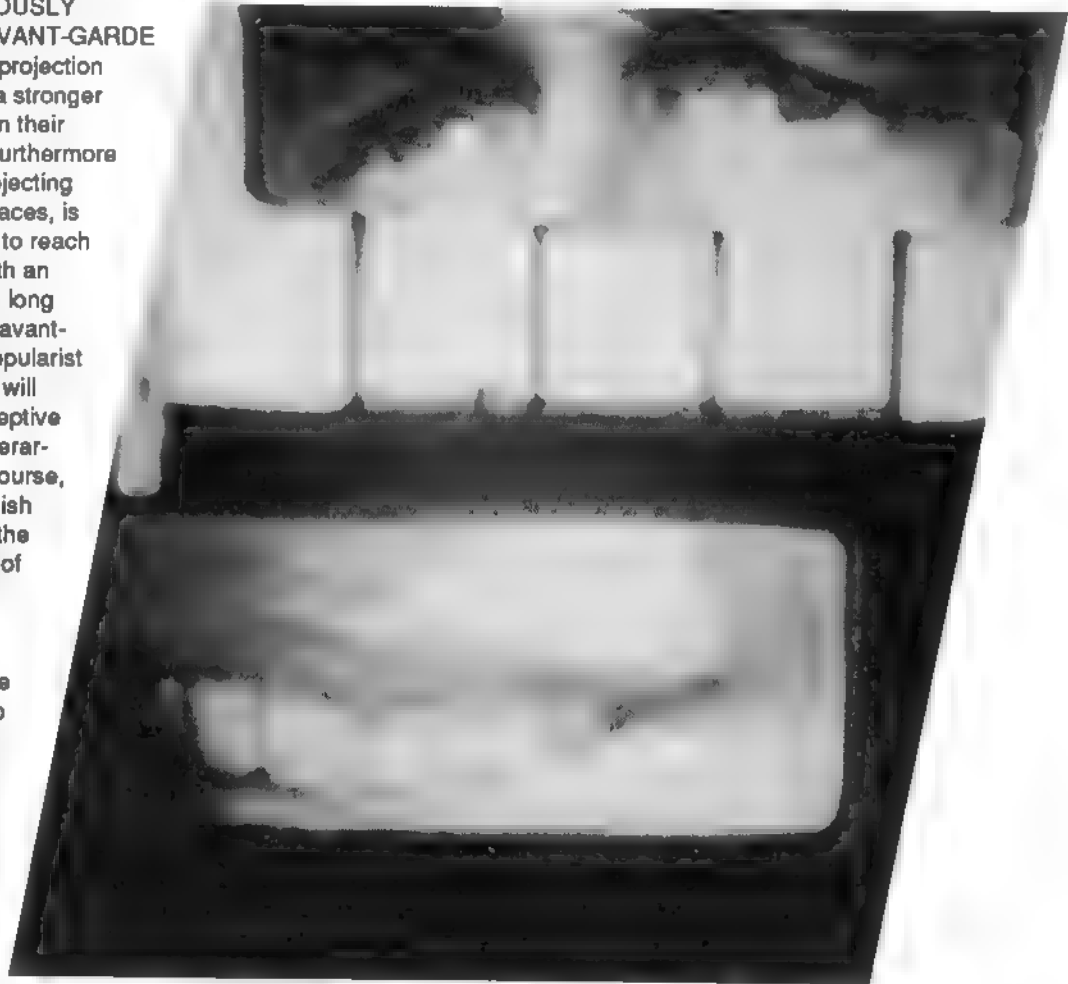
Finally we propose the establishment of an annual conference for itinerant film projectionists and film projection artists. We propose that the first of these conferences take place in St. Catharines, Ontario in July, 1990."

Committee for the Future of Cinema

RECENT REPORTS, UNCONFIRMED AT PRESSTIME, INDICATE THAT HORDES OF GERIATRIC AVANT-GARDE FILMMAKERS FERVENTLY

CLUTCHING CLOCKWORK BOLEX MOVIE CAMERAS HAVE INVADDED PUBLIC PARKS IN URBAN AREAS ACROSS NORTH AMERICA. BELIEVING THAT THE END OF AVANT-GARDE CINEMA IS IMMIMENT, THESE FILMMAKERS ARE SEEKING A LAST DIRECT COMMUNION WITH NATURE

pating in the Committee for the Future of Cinema and those who would seek employment as archaeologists and reconstructivists of cinema can write to me care of: Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, 67A Portland Street, Toronto, Ontario M5V 2M9, Canada.



BEFORE THEY, AND AVANT-GARDE CINEMA, ARE CONSIGNED TO AN UNMARKED PAUPERS' GRAVE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK. The profound shared agony which has prompted these actions underlines the extreme gravity of the crisis now facing avant-garde cinema. It is important for filmmakers to begin preparing themselves and make every effort to assist officials from the Department of Production Equipment Confiscation and Humane Banishment once it is established. Itinerant film projectionists and film projection artists interested in partici-

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Photo, page 7: Screen for one of Jim Bond's Nocturnal Projections, Lincoln Park, Chicago, July 1987. Photo, this page: from Wildwest Show by Al Razutis.

LEAVING THE THEATRE

FILM



ISABELLE ROUSSET

THE BRAINCHILD OF ISABELLE ROUSSET, **FILM TREK** WAS A 28 STOP TOUR THAT TOOK INDEPENDENT CANADIAN FILMWORK INTO THE WILDS OF ONTARIO. Armed with a handpainted van, generator, screen and a projector stand that folded out from the rear of the van - **FILM TREK**'s two month jaunt (June-August 1989) took independent work out of the theatres and into parks, campsites and playgrounds, unfolding an independent vision before eyes grown old with the habit of American features. A year and a half in the planning stages, Isabelle Rousset and Kevin

Kudla gave the nod to four programs of shorts, each about 1/2 hour in length, all purchased with hard \$\$\$ before going down the road, before leaving roads altogether.

Thursday, June 22

We're ready/we're not ready, but who is? Still sewing projection tent - European sailcloth and Heavy Duty Bugscreen. Got a projector, speakers, amp, generator, 2000' of cable, screen, spare bulbs, spare belts, powerbars, stands, tools, film, films, cameras, tripod, lights, film cleaner, splicer, tape, gaffer tape, tent, coolers, sleeping bags, Coleman stove, flashlights, inflatable raft,

clothes, towels, toothbrush, travellers cheques, maps PLUS art supplies, paper, pens, programs, posters, sort-of-insurance, gotta bring my pillow, tapes, Muskol, Raid Coil... what else? Wrik, Kevin and I. Lots of film. About \$60 of strong Turkish ground coffee, spices, herbs, sun-dried tomatoes even - gourmet trek - fun trek - film trek - crazy trek around this vast province taking experimental films places where the road leading in and out of towns is a dotted line on maps...

THE IDEA CAME TO ME DURING MY LAST YEAR AT THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF

ART, when this guy from the NFB came to lecture our film class on selling our work. With years of experience he briskly mapped out a filmmaking/distribution strategy based around supply and demand - what types of films were topical and financially rewarding, how many prints you'd have to sell in which marketplace etc. etc. I'd heard all this before and it made me angry. The entire concept had no bearing on the filmmaking I was so taken with - you know - films made because someone badly wanted to make it. That's when I thought how simple it would be to bypass the 'system' and take films directly to the public the way it was in the beginning. Seventeen months and two grants later I'd convinced myself and quite a few others that given the opportunity, Canadians everywhere would be delighted to sit on the grass and watch experimental Canadian films. I was Queen of the Film Trek and we were ready to hit the road!

In 2.5 months we travelled approx. 8000 km of (mostly back) roads bringing film to 28 communities across Ontario.

June 28

Princess Cinema/Waterloo Great show! (Beside local police station) In the parking lot outside Princess Cinema. Our host John Tutt, an obvious film enthusiast did quite a considerable amount of publicity for Film Trek. Posters colored in all over the place and the wildest radio interview with 'Pops'! Scuttle-

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TREK

butt lodge material harping on about the local boys and Canadian content. Great soundtrack material.

June 29

Guelph

Screening at Goldies Mill Historical site next to Speed River in Guelph. Stunning site. Ruins of a church with big blocks of stone, iron bars in windows, plants growing inside and of course the stars and open sky above. Screened reels #2 and 4 for approx. 80 people. It's so weird and wonderful showing these films to people.

Reel #1: God's Greatest Creation by Tom Preimsburger; 8 Frames Per Second by Chuck Clarke; The Fear of Cancer by Keith Elliot; Waving by Ann Marie Fleming; Edge of Extinction by Elaine Pain; Primito Too Taa by Ed Ackerman.

Reel #2: Yeelen by Lisa Miles; On the Pond by Philip Hoffman; Garden of Earthly Delights by Stan Brakhage; Pretending We Were Indians by Katharine Assals; Food Gathering by Donna Evans; Caress by Gary Popovich; The Blob Thing by Brian Stockton.

Reel #3: The Umbrella by Jacques Raybault; Little Brother Watches Back by Tom Thibault; Spokes and Ties by Tyler Stadius; Mysterious Moon Men of Canada by Colin Brunton;

Reel #4: passing through/torn formations by Philip Hoffman

Reel #5: The Last Days of

Conitron by Richard Kerr

June 30

Your Festival, Hamilton Had a better screening than last night. Started with The Last Days of Conitron, then played reel #2. A Japanese man was intrigued by Last Days, liked the style of expression, but wondered at the aggressiveness and violence in what he saw since Canadians are such 'peace loving' people.

July 3

Rockpoint Provincial Park, Port Maitland Rockpoint is such an ugly place we didn't spend any time. Why, when there is so much land, so many trees, do people insist on cramming 215 campsites side by side on an acre of sad and treeless land?

July 5

Don's Farm, Cambridge I got the farmer to pull us out with his tractor. Went up to him first thing this morning and told him our predicament. (Headline: "Film Trek Stuck In The Mud") He was looking at me, mouth hanging, eyes all aquiver, listening slowly. After turning the hay he came by with a 5-leaf clover. 'It's not as lucky as a 4-leaf clover', he says smiling and hands it to me.

July 8

St. Catherines Successful screening in large gazebo structure, Montebello Park. 150+ people in audience. Played reels #1

and 2. All short films and it went over very well. Good comments from a lot of people. Artists everywhere. Niagara Artist Centre politics going on, one board member claims, 'Film is not a visual art.' This no reflection on tremendous job by Martin Rumsby in hosting Film Trek.

July 12

Woodstock

Showed reels #1 and 3 to about 60 people in the backyard to the Woodstock Public Gallery. Brenda Wentstob was helpful. Her husband is a projectionist and he brought the popcorn. Audience very old and very young. Excited about seeing film outside but I got a funny feeling (sensing their anticipation) that they weren't gonna get what they came for. Not quite anyway. Brenda expressed interest in programming independent films.

THE BEST SCREENINGS

were in larger centres (!) where our hosts had done lots of publicity and chosen a location for the screening that was centrally located. This insured a good core audience from the local arts community and increased the odds of luring night prowlers to watch some films. Screenings that didn't work were badly publicized and in remote locations. It was nice seeing people arrive with desk chairs, blankets, thermoses etc. and set up for the evening.

July 15

Windsor

Incredible screening in

Dieppe Park, downtown Windsor. Screen set by the Detroit River with big old Detroit in the background. Things are shaking up there. Screened reels #1, 3 and Last Days. Very public - how it should be. 250 people flung out on the grass, some drinking, most stayed. Response, patience and enthusiasm. It looked beautiful with the river and boats going by, the skyline, the lights, film, people. Last Days looked great!

July 18

Teesewater

Drove to Teesewater after two glory days of camping feeling much more relaxed now. Very low on dough - a major reason to worry. Without \$ we can't continue. Teesewater is tiny but Ed Ackerman is alive and well. About 20 kids and 14 adults come to screening. Play reel #3 and 1. One man enjoys the show I think. Ed says it's unfair to make people sit through these films.

Till well into the tour we were tense when setting up the shows. Technically it was smooth and very professional but for one, I was uncomfortable about introducing the screenings. It felt odd to stand up outside in front of people talking about experimental films and how Canadians rarely saw Canadian films. Generally our audiences sympathized with my barely audible, fast, stricken delivery and pretended not to notice I was up there. When the

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screening was over and I'd said, 'That's all folks, thanks for coming', I could finally relax, be normal and talk. Most often asked questions: 'How'd you get this job?' and 'Are you coming back next summer?'

July 24

Sudbury

Drove to Sudbury and camp at Fairbank Provincial Park. Show in Amphitheatre Bell Park - it sucks. Three people stay for reel #3 so we stop after that. I spray Muskol in my eyes.

July 26

Second day of the fire ban which detracts from camping. No fires at night. Our air mattress is starting to bust its seams. They explode in the middle of the night and its getting lumpy and precarious. Those tacky motels look better and better.

THE ONLY OTHER PROBLEMS WE FACED ON TOUR WERE FINANCIAL AND LEGAL. We kept running out of money and when Wrik left we didn't have a driver's license which would mean the end of FILM TREK if we were stopped. During the long, numbing stretch to Thunder Bay and back we took up the refrain, 'Film Trek, cross your fingers, knock on wood, hope we'd don't get stopped, hope we don't blow up...' Ontario is not always pretty but people were friendly, we were well received, in some towns quite famous and none of my worst fears came true.

July 28

North Bay

Screening a success. 150 people seem starved for entertainment/culture. It's a long way away. Berated by a drunken fireman wondering if he can get some of this stuff on video. Kev swears

Morgentaler attended the show. People very interested - expect us to come back and 'Why isn't there more of this kind of thing????'

July 31

The road ended in Sultan, literally, so we decided to spend the night. Population: 165. Dirt roads, train station, overgrown skating rink. For \$20/night got a room at Fem's motel, thinking it'll either be great or we'll get shot here. Had a great time speaking with Fem and husband and family in the restaurant/tavern. Conversations social and political moving around life in a small northern community. Everyone's small town nastiness - stabs in the back. No one supporting the local tavern, no gov't grants, teenagers splitting cuz there's not not much to keep them in Sultan. A town ending.

I REMEMBER WONDERING WHY FILM TOURING WASN'T A MORE COMMON FORM OF FILM EXHIBITION/DISTRIBUTION but the amount of red tape we had to go through was hopeless. Nearly. At first legalities seem impossible but you do what you can and don't let anything stop. Some considerations for improved film touring would include: becoming a non-profit charitable status organization to receive more funding and corporate scholarship, working more closely with hosting parties to secure appropriate screening locations and better publicity, travel across the country to look for work when curating Canadian films. Get a driver's license. Don't camp in Southern Ontario. Go Global.

August 4

Civic Holiday Week, Elk Lake Very wild screening! Finally got our hands on a newspaper with international cover-

age. Mel brought us the whole week - fresh spring H2O. We screened in Town Arena after bicycle rodeo and police dog demonstration and before the Teen Dance. Place was packed after previous events but everyone left quickly except for the two

Gallery 101 folks. It was a really fun screening. Enthusiastic, relaxed audience. David Poole, Phil Hoffman, Tom McSorley and other celebs lying on the grass enjoying the show. Hung out after talking - suggestions for X Canada tour? Excited but



ladies locking up, a strange young guy and a family up from Toronto for the civic holiday. Celebs! Introducing show was hell.

August 7

Ottawa

Ottawa - home of the Canada Council! Completely broke - phoned home. Had to have a good show bought copper wire to ground all equipment in case of radio interference. Set up early - had help glad-bagging park lights from

tired. 'Uncle Phil' was good to us. Send \$!

WHEN WE CAME HOME, thin and dazed, everyone wanted to know 'How d'it go? Was it a success?' It's difficult to draw objective conclusions while still in the throes of post-project-bewilderment but I strongly endorse this way of life and urge other filmmakers and artists in general to take advantage of the summer months to bring their work outside.

LEAVING THE THEATRE

PAUL COUILLARD

**AN
INTERVIEW
WITH
PHILLIP
BARKER**

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PHILLIP BARKER IS AN ARTIST WHO CREATES LARGE OUTDOOR INSTALLATION WORKS THAT COMBINE FILM PROJECTIONS WITH LIVE PERFORMANCE. PAUL COUILLARD SPOKE TO HIM ABOUT HIS WORK AND HOW HE USES FILM AS ONE ELEMENT IN CREATING VISUAL SPECTACLES.

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Paul: I'd like to start with some very general information about your background and what you've done to date.

Phillip: I came here from England when I was thirteen with my family and later I went to art college because there was nothing else I could do. My father is now a retired auto mechanic, and I think a lot of my basic understanding of structure and interest in tools and hardware came from him. I have this need to create beauty when all I know how to do is machines.

Paul: You studied at OCA?

Phillip: I studied at OCA and went to New York for my fifth year as part of the first group in the off-campus study program. I stayed for eight months. At that point I was painting—figures, landscapes, nudes in bathtubs.... I

changed completely in New York. I came back and got interested in video, sculpture and performance, but that was my last year at OCA so I went into the job market immediately.

My return coincided with the Toronto film boom of the late 1970s. I was hired as a set painter and then as a special effects technician working with tv commercials. That gave me an introduction to sculpture. It was the first hands-on experience I had with materials; before I was only painting and drawing.

I was doing my own work part-time. I worked for a year and during that time I built this thing called *Aqueous Humour* at the place where I made special effects. It was a ton and a half of water suspended inside vertical soft vinyl tubes I'd made on a machine that bonds vinyl

together. There was water and goldfish and bubbling oxygen and it was set in front of a window at YYY at their old location on Queen St. The piece made reference to the human eye. It was a gallery with three walls and one window and the images that came through the water were inverted like what happens with the aqueous humour of the eye.

Paul: So it worked like a giant lens?

Phillip: Yes, in a way. Each plastic tube was like a separate lens; each one contained the world. That piece got me interested in doing site-specific work.

Paul: When was that?

Phillip: Around 1980. After working full-time for a year making special effects, I went to Europe with the money I'd saved and travelled around for a year and a half. I gave up visual art and became a street musician for about eight months in Paris playing the mandolin in the metro, restaurants, cafes and bars. I joined a band and travelled with them through France down to Cannes for the film festival where we played on the streets in front of

theatres line-ups. At the time I would do one thing and stop, do something else for a year and stop—first sculpture, then music. I feel like I'm putting it all together now no more excuses. I can try doing everything at once in spite of my reservations of knowing I'm not that good at everything.

A year later I was back in Europe, living in Holland and mostly doing my own work. I had an installation in Lumen Travo, a small Amsterdam gallery, with film and painting and a mechanized sculpture of a dog that moved across a wall on a track. I started *Trust a Boat* over there when I was on my last legs financially.

Trust A Boat started as an idea I had from watching windows when I was living in Amsterdam on the fifth floor of a building. Across the street were a series of apartments where people all seemed to do things at the same time, like at 11 o'clock they'd watch the news. They would all be watching the two Dutch tv channels so the rooms were all lit up with one colour or the other. It created very graphic patterns running through the building.

I was also interested in the window as a frame, the way it frames the outside against the inside. It's like your train stopping at a station, and when the train next to you starts to move you can't tell if you're moving or not. Once you take away those orientation points your imagination takes over. It frees it up. I think that's what I'm trying to do for myself, to take away certain dogmas of life that create habits that restrain imagination. I'm always looking for ways to free myself and of course hopefully other people can experience the same thing through my work.

Paul: *Trust a Boat* involved simultaneous projections from the inside of a building onto nine windows—three across and three down—that could be seen from the street. The building became like a giant screen. Mostly it was film, but there was also a performance aspect to it.

Phillip: There were nine separate ten-minute films. I had to think of a way to hold the audience while the film was being rewound. What were they going to be looking at? I toyed with the idea of silhouettes and then having the film silhouettes turn into real silhouettes—very simple stuff but it turned out to be



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quite effective when what you had thought was a film silhouette opens the window and looks out at you. I was also interested in breaking the illusion I'd created and real people on a real scale certainly does that. It gave the audience a direct contact with what they were doing on the street with this house. I mean, this house is not really full of giant goldfish.

When I did it in Holland I also found people saying things like, "It was great the way you got that police car drive by the same time the blue lights were flashing." Once you create an event everything around it becomes connected.

Paul: People don't know anymore what's planned and what's spontaneous.

Phillip: Right, so of course I started to play with that. At one site in Holland there was a welder working down the street sending out these blue flashes, so in Peterborough and Toronto I got a welder to work on an adjacent rooftop at certain points. In effect, she welded the different sections of the performance together. Things like that make you aware as an audience member that you are on the street, not in a darkened room.

Paul: You also did that by choosing a prime downtown location where there was not just a selected audience but also passers-by who didn't know what was going on who'd be drawn into it.

Phillip: I love to experience things as a passer-by.

Paul: Is that your gauge of success—looking at it as if you were a passer-by and asking whether it would intrigue you?

Phillip: I suppose I'm affected by the amount of people who see it. It makes me feel good about using public money if a lot of people get to see it. I love breaking down those art barriers and getting out of the galleries, but I guess success comes to me weeks after the event when I'm just on my own thinking about it.

Paul: I'm interested in talking about the technical aspects of *Trust A Boat*. At some points you have nine separate film images but at other points they make up

one giant image.

Phillip: The only film experience I'd had to that point was S8. My dad had a S8 camera and he used to encourage me to use it. My first idea was to put nine S8 cameras on a wooden frame with a stick and film the scenes like that. But being in a different country it's very easy to change your identity and take tremendous risks, so I just started phoning up these Dutch filmmakers whom I didn't

Paul: Yet it worked remarkably well in terms of synch, for example when the woman's giant face looks out it was very effective in creating the illusion of being a single image.

Phillip: I was always aware this was going to be a problem, so she comes from the centre up close to the top then she rests and then she goes down to the bottom and rests; there are always these rest points so the images appear to catch

WHEN IT CHANGES, THEY START TO GO AND AS THEY GO FASTER THEY GET MORE AND MORE OUT OF SYNCH. A CAR GOES THROUGH THE RIGHT WINDOW AND THE LEFT WINDOW AND THEN IT GOES THROUGH THE MIDDLE WINDOW. SO YOU GET THIS KIND OF VARIABLE BUT BEAUTIFUL BY-PRODUCT.

know to ask for appointments. Later on I'd find out they were the top filmmakers in the country. I'd show them this drawing of nine S8 film cameras and ask them what they thought of the idea. First someone suggested using nine 16mm cameras and I was asked how they were going to all run in sync because their motors would run at different speeds. Eventually somebody suggested taking one film and splitting it optically so I called this assistant cameraman I had heard about, Jan Wich. He became the cameraman and shot the scenes for me in 35mm with the camera on its side so it matches the vertically oriented shape of the window. That meant when it was projected all of the projectors had to lay on their sides. I knew we were going to get out-of-sync problems, so I decided to shoot all the scenes from one point of view. The camera was fixed with long dissolves from scene to scene, but no matter what I tried to do to make the film flow and mask the fact that it was getting out of sync, it was still a very obvious thing. To me it's one of the very beautiful things that happened. I liked the effect, like in the scene when you're looking down on the street and all the cars are waiting for the light to change. When it changes, they start to go and as they go faster they get more and more out of synch. A car goes through the right window and the left window and then it goes through the middle window, so you get this kind of variable but beautiful by-product.

up with each other. It was hard because I was just crossing my fingers hoping what I was doing would be right. Now I want to do more work in this format because I'm seeing things that can really make full use of this style of playing with the space.

Paul: You had nine people performing in different locations in the building. How did you get them all synched?

Phillip: The choreographer, Marianna Ebbers, had made an audio guide track that was playing in all the rooms. We had decided that at certain points the people in the house would suddenly do the same thing and then fall out of sync again the way the film did. It was very weird going inside that house. I wish I could have brought people inside, because it was so different. Outside you had these very serene images and beautiful music. Once I went inside in Toronto and through the same system that Marianna's voice was playing there was this country and western music and they were having a hoe-down. People at that point were well aware of what they were doing and were finding ways of breaking tension.

The thing I'm learning most about my work is respecting the tools I use. A lot of my resources are people and I'm learning a lot about people as the years go by. At first I was more interested in the product and now how I get there is more important. *Magnetic Fields* was full of very important creative input from everybody involved. Most people were

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artists anyway and the big task I had to set myself before starting was to sit back and let people do it, give them space to become involved.

Paul: Rather than imprinting your ideas on them it was more like you were the director who focuses them so that their talents come out.

Phillip: Yes, I provide the frame.

Paul: In *Magnetic Fields*, you created an illusion of giant living paintings several stories high. Painted images were projected onto an area of cloth the size of a building with a wooden frame around it. Behind the cloth was a scaffolding which performers used as a support for interacting with the projected images. They would appear from behind the cloth at various heights, hanging from the scaffolding or things coming out from it, like a trapeze. Taken as a whole, the images suggested a loose narrative. How was that piece developed?

Phillip: The images and the story line was mine, but a lot of the movement and the emotion came from the people working on it.

Paul: It seems like the technology in creating large visual images is a very important aspect of your work, but you also incorporate live performance. You're not just putting what you do on a movie screen somewhere. Both *Trust A Boat* and *Magnetic Fields* involve live people as part of the image.

Phillip: There's a different shape and depth than a movie screen. I'm interested in making a film, but this is much more for me because it investigates those areas in between. When you see a film you sit in a darkened room with 100 people and enter an illusion. You get lost in a story and the person next to you becomes unimportant. Being on the street heightens people's physical awareness of their involvement with the work. They have to be conscious about going along with the illusion and make a decision to get involved in its interpretation.

Paul: It's true when I saw *Trust A Boat* I became very aware of the space—the cold, the parking lot and the people around me, the passers-by. It felt like a living situation rather than a controlled environment where the whole point is to make you forget your own body, to give your body over to the eyes.

Phillip: Right.

Paul: How do you balance the technical demands of your work with the needs of the performers?

Phillip: You know the guys in the circus who spin plates? By the time they've started spinning the last plate they have to run back to the first one to keep them all spinning. I've learned to delegate to other people whom I trust. I work with a choreographer, but the choreographer is also limited to the space I can give her. I don't know what direction is, I just know that an hour before the show I'm going to say, "You know the part where we do this and that—can we get rid of that?" Or, "Could you do something different with this person?" It has frustrated people I've worked with.

Paul: I guess that's also something that separates it from a purely filmic experience for an audience. Once the post production is done a film remains constant whereas with a live performance there's always that element of uncertainty about what's going to happen that night.

Phillip: It's also separate from theatre, because there's no script. It's like continually remaking a film.

Paul: What are your pieces "about"?

Phillip: On one level it's just me playing. Without that play I never would have done it, so I'm not excusing myself at all. It's during the making and performing that I really start to understand what it's about.

There's two answers to the question. What I would like people to do through my work—and I don't know if it's me or some energy that goes through me that creates these things—is to understand it and participate in it through their imaginations. In *Trust A Boat* I'm saying, "Imagine a house full of water." And people smile and walk down the street and think, "Imagine a house full of fire," or "Imagine a house full of insects." So *Trust A Boat* is trust your imagination, I suppose.

That's one way of looking at it. In another way, it's a personal story. People who know me well say, "How could you do that, Phillip? I know what that's supposed to mean."

And *Magnetic Fields* is about the attraction you have to something. You don't want to get too close to it or it will burn you up like the sun. You want to stay within the field of attraction and

dance around it.

Paul: Tread a tightrope.

Phillip: Yes, but it's more of a happy tightrope, more of a dance. I guess it feels like a journey I'm going through, about separation from security and movement through profession and all the risks you run into when you do work. And it's about how you accomplish it, that there is a happy ending.

Paul: But you try to convey these things without words.

Phillip: Right, just music and image.

Paul: I find that refreshing given the current preoccupation with language. I find it interesting that you feel so tentative about defining your work with words when there's so much text-based work being produced in visual art and film right now.

Phillip: As soon as you start putting in words people start to close off their minds to what's there. They get lazy. People really wondered why I wanted to fill up a house with the illusion of water as I did in *Trust A Boat*. This is what irritates me and the reason I don't quite fit into the art scene—I'm not good at putting my ideas into words. I think North America reflects a lack of confidence in itself because of its lack of history, so people want everything explained.

Paul: Do you think it's different in Europe?

Phillip: Yes, but I'm not criticizing North American society. In fact I'm a product of it. I wasn't born here but I'm really Canadian. And the fact that I can do something disregarding the culture or history in Europe makes me more of an individual there when I'm working there. Dutch people just do not go around projecting huge things on buildings. They're very reserved, intellectual, culturally oriented people, but with a high regard for the poetic. I guess I'm in the middle, straddling both concepts of what art is or isn't.

Here I've found that people want to know what *Trust A Boat* is in words; they stand in front of the building and they want to read a pamphlet that tells them what they're looking at.

Photo credits: page 13, by Phillip Barker; page 14, by Frits Falkenhagen.

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WYN GELEYNSE

JOSEPH WYATT

FUNDAMENTAL to the work of London, Ontario artist, Wyn Geleynse, is the advent of his 16mm continuous film loop projections. In 1987 Geleynse's work underwent a significant format change by using the picture window of his Victorian home to receive his projected imagery. In doing so the artist realized a format which offered increased possibilities for the work in addition to reaching a greater audience outside the confines of the art gallery environment.

THE WORK, *A Film Projection for 210 Tecumseh Avenue, East*, London, Ontario presented May 30 to June 5, 1987 depicted the artist's face expanded to the monumental proportions of fifty inches by sixty inches and framed by the window of his residence. Outside, concealed by shrubbery, were speakers playing a continuous audio of stairs creaking. The image of the oversized, surveying head turning slowly from side to side was shot with a singular, unchanging camera angle focused only on the figure's stern and attentive gaze as it monitored the street outside. The work, suitably titled by others as 'Neighborhood Watch', contained an ominous quality as the Orwellian concept of 'Big Brother' was manifested on a quiet residential street in London, Ontario. It exemplified the protectionism of home ownership and family security.

COUNTERBALANCING THE SERIOUS ASSOCIATIONS OF THE WORK was the light-hearted perception of viewing the two-storey house reduced to doll-house size by the scale of the colossal head. In contrast, the presentation of *A Film Projection for the Hamilton Artists Inc. Printspace Window* differs drastically, especially with regard to its locale. Whereas the London projection took place in confines familiar to the artist, the Hamilton work is situated in an urban setting containing an unpredictable audience. Bordering the location of the projection in this commercially depressed area is a discount store, a pest control agency and a pawnbroker. Given the structure of the community, Geleynse has chosen the human condition of despair as the content for this work.

IN A FILM PROJECTION for the *Hamilton Artists' Inc. Printspace Window* a black and white projected image of a male figure remains relatively motionless. It sits huddled in a corner of a non-furnished room. The only movements made by the nude, slightly larger than life figure are to readjust its cowering position or to rub his face in an act of disabling despair and denial of identity. The body is posed in avoidance of the camera's gaze, revealing to the viewer the back of its head, the back of its torso, and the soles of its feet. The voyeuristic aspect of human nature gives the work a nervous tension as the viewer's compulsion is to observe the figure in anticipation of a revealing gesture or movement to further expose itself. This happens in spite of the artist's inclusion of skips and jumps in the film to remind the viewer that he is witnessing a two-dimensional image.

AS ONLY TWO WINDOW PROJECTIONS HAVE BEEN EXECUTED TO DATE IT IS UNNECESSARY TO PROVIDE AN EVOLUTIONARY CONTEXT FOR THE FORMAT as one is basically the antithesis for the other. Although both share similarities in structure, the parameters surrounding the work, especially that of locale, differ drastically. Geleynse's ability to engage the public, while successful in the London projection, is unknown in Hamilton given the unpredictability of the urban audience involved. It is important to realize that the presentation of work in public spaces is always an experiment in viewer response. *A Film Projection for the Hamilton Artists' Inc. Printspace Window* should evoke the full spectrum of emotive responses from its spectators ranging from outrage to fascination, which is the desired effect of all challenging and vital work.



LEAVING THE THEATRE

AN EXPLORATION OF THE NESTING METAPHORS OF A PROJECTED *PROJECTION*

PETER GIBSON

IT IS NIGHT AND WINTER. THE SITE IS DARK. Bits of plaster, wood and rubble - the building's archeology - protest under foot. People are gathered in a semi-circle behind a sighting device, a stand crowned by an old 16mm projector, its arms and pulleys removed, replaced instead by a flat-mounted film lopp jig and a broom, drooping like a tail. A large sack of eggs hangs in a net bag under the projector - equal to the weight of transformation. In front of the sighting device in the middle of the space rises the smoke from a fire. No, not the sign of human community, but steam rising from a screen constructed of copper piping - an amateur plumber's delight. Seven feet wide and seven high, with triangular open work pylons - at both ends, supplied by six large kettles, their spouts attached feeding three perforated transverse pipes, the frame produces a sheet of steam bouyed toward the ceiling. To one side a portable gas-driven generator grumbles. Cables from it run to the kettles. Somehow, strangely like a displaced operating room, surgical tubing snakes along the ceiling before dropping to the kettles, the flow of its water regulated by a timer, co-ordinated with the cycle of evaporation of each boiling kettle: 25 minutes. The mounting column of steam is illuminated, its brightness reflected in the faces of the

onlookers caught in the galvanic pull as if by television magic.

OVER SEVERAL MONTHS, A SERIES OF SUCH PROJECTIONS will take place in derelict buildings - some with the consent of landlords, some without - guerilla attacks.

EACH INSTALLATION WILL BE SITE SPECIFIC. The images projected form archaeological probes, repressed intimate history of the site and signs of belief, death, birth and integration. Site research is required: a family portrait scanned, a crucifix, wallpaper patterns; an old dog circles in the snow and defecates, a fat blind man taps his way along the street - a crack in a wall is followed, a varicose vein, a bowl of fruit, an ear, clouds, a light, a broken plate, a mole on a cheek, a lock of hair. These mundane images regrouped in pairs, reclamations of history and valuation play over and over. Different combinations are appropriate to each site. Each time, the effect of the sequence migrates slightly in the viewers mind. By accretion, images take on resonant meaning. They become nesting eggs: eggs within eggs: 'to symbolic thinking, the world is not only 'alive' but 'open': an object is never simply itself (as in the case of modern consciousness), it is also a repository for something else.' (Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and The Crucible*)

THE CENTRAL MOTIF of each installation of *Steam Screen/Sleep Chaser* is the dialectical oppositon of looking and seeing - of perception, the data of our senses, and vision, the internal site of the unconscious, the primordial archetype, the mythopoeic.

THE STEAM SCREEN IS ALSO FOUNDED IN RITUAL, a multi-layered alchemical metaphor. As an alchemist's furnace, it embodies the embryonic, obstetric and gynecological symbolism of birthing. This is still shared by miners and smelters who, like sacred midwives, bring impure ores to rebirth through their own immolation. The practioners of alchemy clearly understood that the cycle of death, passion and marriage with other elements applied not to the turning of base lead into precious gold, but to their psychological integration, the salvation of the soul. *Steam Screen/Sleep Chaser* reflects similar intents in its transformation of water into steam, working purposely in ironic counterpoint to what Mircea Eliade terms the hidden visionary project in modern society: 'The visionary's myth of perfection and redemption of nature survives in camouflaged form in the pathetic program of industrial societies whose aim is the total transmutation of Nature, its transformation into 'energy'.' Here, by returning the energy of electricity to steam, progress recycles energy as weather.

LEAVING THE THEATRE

AN INTERVIEW
WITH PAULA
FAIRFIELD

Jim MacSwain

Jim: Can you give us a brief history of your creative work?

Paula: I went to the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) in Halifax and did a BFA. For three years I studied photography. Out of that I got interested in moving images and then I tried video and switched to Intermedia in my last year and worked with Jan Peacock. The summer before I graduated I got a make-work program at the Atlantic NFB salvaging film leader under Les Holman who was head of the Sound Department there. When I graduated from NSCAD I began an apprenticeship program at the NFB. I was hired to do camera work but nothing came up so I stayed in the sound editing rooms and became Les' assistant for four years. I synched a lot of rushes. All this time I was working on some my own videos but then I was invited by Studio D to participate in the International Youth Year Program. This brought together 25 women for the creation of five films. Out of that I completed a first film entitled *First Take*, *Double Take*, which has just

been released. Then I didn't know what to do. I was frustrated in Halifax because there's no money. I kept getting turned down for grants because my work suffered from lack of good equipment. I knew if I wanted to work in film and video I had to leave. So I came to Toronto, which was the last thing I wanted to do. But here I am. I continued to work at the Film Board here in Toronto on a project *Trouble With The Law* which I had started in Halifax. The Film Board had decided to work out of artist run spaces so I did the post-production at Charles St. Video. In the meantime I got a job at LIFT in 1985 on another project. This was the first time there was a full time staff so I was part of a new surge at LIFT. But a position came up at Charles St and I took it because of access to the equipment and because the pay was better which of course is a necessary consideration in Toronto. I've been at Charles St. ever since and work very closely with the other five staff. Because of that I've become very close to the video equipment and as a result I've learned an enormous amount about this technology.

Jim: Do you have free access to the equipment at Charles St?

Paula: No I don't.

Jim: How do you finance your videos?

Paula: My work at Charles St. provides me with a living and also as a result of working at Charles St. I've begun to edit for people and then I am

awarded grants from time to time. I also work with a core of people and we swap services or we pay each other a very small wage. We don't call ourselves a collective per se but we do work in a collective manner. Over time we've developed a very good rapport with one another. This enables us to explore new technologies which in turn allows us to expand our technical skills in a supportive environment.

Jim: How much did *Fragments* cost?

Paula: The bottom line on that production was about \$18,000, which came from a Canada Council Video Production Grant. I paid all twelve crew members and spent money on good quality equipment and on the art direction in a rented studio space. The first shoot was at Trinity Square Video which was of the television video footage, the Modern of Miracles part. The other shoot was at 489 College St. on the fourth floor of this building that was being renovated. We worked for three days on three sets that were inches from each other. We had to fend off sandblasters and find electrical power for our Saturday morning. This was exactly a year to the day I arrived in Toronto.

Jim: That brings us to this whole question of the crossover artist. You did this video for \$18,000 and then you transferred it to film.

Paula: Yes, I took the video footage and had that kinied to film and then I went into the negative of the film footage

and had it cut for the video. I took the sound track and transferred it although I lost a great deal of ambience on the 16mm optical which we did three times. This was up to the deadline of the Festival of Festivals so I had to give it up and let it go.

Jim: What would compel you to go through all that anxiety?

Paula: I don't think of myself as a video artist or film artist at this point. The video community sees *Fragments* as being more filmic and film people think of it as a video. But coming out of Intermedia at NSCAD I see all this technology as a part of this media palette that you can use. *Fragments* includes video, 16mm and footage filmed off a TV set because I wanted this roll bar ambience. I think of this as a hybrid of film and video. So you get all these various textures which all are referenced to their various histories; grotty video says alternative, slick video says TV, grainy 16mm film, pristine 35, are all connected to different aspects of our media culture.

Jim: There is a historical connection to video that as it is cheaper than film, it is the preference of minorities. It can be shot fast and dirty in real time so that there is a product that is topical and to some extent involves a narrative. This influences the style of art video, while experimental film as it has evolved is more formalistic and plays with real time, expanding and contracting it. Do you think this is a fair contrast?

CROSSING OVER

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Paula: I've heard all these arguments of the differences between film and video. Because of the evolving technology and the ways this

Paula: To some extent. Feminist film theory has gone a long way in dealing with mainstream cinema and the problems of the female as



technology has created a global culture, the two mediums are melding together, which scares some people so that they defend their own medium to the death. I know that there are some film producers as well as video producers who go for high production values and that some, on the other hand, shoot fast and dirty. And there are formalists in both camps. But video is not that cheap anymore because the technology is not cheap if you want the high production value, especially in post production. Then there are ways of cutting costs by using either film or video at some stage in the editing process with both the sound and the picture. I think there will be more and more people calling themselves media artists, those who are using both film and video in these various ways.

Jim: Was this idea of being a media artist influenced by your feminism?

viewer and viewed. My work tries to deal with popular culture and how women are perceived in mass culture. Historically, we've been denied access to mass media technology and my job is to gain access to that technology and to use the whole range of its possibilities. At the recent National Video Caucus in Halifax, most of the people around the table were women. The commercial world is still dominated by men, but even there you see more and more women.

Jim: Are you saying that feminists need to have a grasp on all technology in order to subvert it?

Paula: I certainly wouldn't presume to speak for all feminists but for me I've had a need to learn about technology since I was a little girl. This is my way of dealing with culture and how I deal with women in mass culture. I'm not saying that all men technicians are assholes, but if you're a woman and you walk into a highly technologi-

cal environment you are never assumed to know anything. If I want to run the gamut of technology or if I want to use anything that is necessary to the work, I want to know how it functions. I need to put my heart and soul into the work, so I don't want to be working with a bored technician, especially a bored male technician.

Jim: When you make a media product are you thinking of a particular audience?

Paula: Yes. Traditionally the audience for film has been perceived to be male. I'm trying to work with a range of ideas based on several feminist writers on the possibilities of a new language for female viewers. Now I always assume the viewer is female.

Jim: Creating a new visual and audio language means working outside of the traditional language of either video or film.

Paula: What fascinates me is copying the mainstream but pushing it through parody or satire so that it turns in on itself. Most mainstream media is used to sell products. I copy these advertisements with my own ends in mind. Because these styles are familiar the audience can hook into them. I think this is one way of creating a new language.

Jim: Then the audience for this new language can be either a film or video audience. Do you think they will look at the work in the same way in its projected format?

Paula: No, I don't think so. When you see the TV footage of *Fragments* on a monitor it is more in line with other TV advertisement but when you see it on the big screen you don't see that as directly. The film footage is more natural to the big screen, as well as concepts of

dramatic film and film trailers even though they're parodies.

Jim: Let me get this straight. *Fragments* was originally shot in both film and video.

Paula: Yes, and then I had the film transferred to video and the video footage transferred to film when I came to create the film and the video. But some of the video footage went one step further; the *Modern of Miracles* for instance was transferred to film but was then transferred back to video through an Amiga computer which allowed me to crank the contrast, play with the colour so that it doesn't look like true video footage. It actually needed to be dirtied up a bit. So this footage really is part film and video.

Jim: It is being distributed on film and video. Is this a plus for this crossover concept?

Paula: Well, at the moment it's having a hard life in both areas. Like I was saying before, video creators see it as filmic...

Jim: What do they find filmic about it.

Paula: It's because of the 16mm film that copies the film drama, the traditional film mise en scene.

Jim: But there's a lot of video out there that's in the dramatic style.

Paula: Yes but with the music, the aria, and the style of the 16mm it really doesn't look like video. Video looks much flatter.

Jim: Is that one of the aesthetic differences between film and video, this concept of flatness.

Paula: Video is flatter and doesn't lend itself to wide shots because its electronics scan a small screen. 16mm film is created when light is shot onto celluloid so that it maintains some of its original form when it's screened because light is again shot through the celluloid. Thus it

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maintains its depth of space and tiny details within that space. Unless it's been really processed I can always tell the difference between film and video imagery.

Jim: That's space. What's time then?

Paula: I've been thinking about that. With *Fragments*, for instance, I felt that the video was slower than the film. In film you tend to look around at the details because you feel so enveloped by the large screen. But when you watch that small TV set you feel the pacing is slower because you take in the image so much faster, which I think is why the tradition of fast-paced cutting and close ups have evolved for video.

Jim: That's one of the difficult things about this type of creative endeavour - we don't have a word for it yet.

Paula: I picked up a new magazine yesterday that combines communications, film, video, audio, computers and robotics. The name of the magazine is *Hypermedia*, which I think comes the closest for me. It's really scary for me to be working in an artist-run space and be responsible for keeping artists informed of technology in the 1990s because of the speed the technology moves.

Ancient is two years old. If you're interested in working in these media you have to do your homework. Every aspect of our lives is eventually going to be affected by these "hyper-technologies".

Jim: For instance there could be an interactive mode between video games and holography.

Paula: I am fascinated with holography. And the New Age faction is into using holographic sound. The combining of holographic film and sound - what is that? And there will be aberrations of this technology just as today there is the

Home Shopping Channel and TV Evangelism. Speaking of aberrations, there's a whole new industry that comes out of this noisy world we've created, soundproofing office buildings. They've become so good at it that they've over-soundproofed offices -

that technology is being used to explore possibilities for survival but on another level there is all this other terrifying surveillance engineering that is brought along with it.

Jim: Do you think that Toronto is creating a crossover community fast enough

Jim: In the last twenty years we've seen an incredible crossover in other art disciplines; theatre with performance, installation with video, performance with film, etc. It would seem that the time has come for film and video.



it's so quiet people go nuts. Instead of pulling back they decided to pipe in "white noise", which on a subliminal level can either calm people or make them paranoid. This is the ultimate control. I think sound is more powerful than image because of its immediacy - it reaches you on a very deep, subtle level. When I work with sound I want to know about these possibilities so that I can use it creatively in my own media.

Jim: I always think that the continual invention of this accelerated technology is a way of trying to escape from this historical moment where we are on the edge of our survival as a species.

Paula: On one level it's true

so that everyone has a passing knowledge of these technological developments?

Paula: I can only speak about my work at Charles St. We often joke about being on the trailing edge of technology rather than the leading edge but we are definitely up there. When you are in a larger centre you are more exposed to this technology but I don't think there is a large crossover community in Toronto at this time. In other smaller art communities like the one in Halifax there is, ironically, more of a crossover community because there is less equipment and money and creators are forced to use the whole gamut of media available to them.

Paula: The Japanese call this crossover area Newmedia.

Jim: I think Hypermedia comes the closest. It has that Nineties edge to it.

Paula: Whatever we call it, I'm committed to the exploration of these media on both a technical and aesthetic level. I think we'll see an explosion of crossover media in the next ten years and I am determined to have some knowledge of these advances, not only for my own work, but also for the larger community interested in these advancements.

Photos: pg. 20, Sheri Kowall in Fragments; above, Maria-Teresa Larrain and Paula Fairfield..

LEAVING THE THEATRE

OUTLOOKS FROM ELSEWHERE: PERSONAL VIEWS FROM ATLANTIC CANADA, PRAIRIES, NYC AND FRANCE

ATLANTIC NAMES



JAMES MACSWAIN

PREAMBLE: ON FOUR WEEKENDS IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, 1989, CALGARY WAS HOST TO A SHOWCASE OF ALTERNATIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL FILM AND VIDEO WORK ENTITLED FILM AND VIDEO FROM THE HEART OF THE HEART OF THE REGIONS - A COUNTRY?. Leila Sujir, the coordinator, invited me to be on a panel discussion which was based on the concept of place. My own tape, *Amherst*, which was in the exhibition, conjures up the small town of that name in Nova Scotia which is the reason I began my paper by referring to it.

AT THE END of my video about my hometown of Amherst, I remark that "much has been edited" - which as I

thought about it seemed to sum up the problem of history and the history of place. For when myself or my friends or my enemies decide to commit memory to paper, the decisions on what to reveal and what to leave in obscurity are the key not to how we will write history but how we will rewrite it.

FROM THE 1860S TO THE 1890S, the Atlantic provinces, particularly Nova Scotia, were equal to the New England States and Upper Canada in economic independence. This economic prosperity was not based on the hierarchi-

cal multinational trickle-down theories of high capitalism. In those days of pioneer protestants the emphasis was on individual morality and freedoms. These pioneer men and women wished to preserve their lives outside the sphere of European conflicts and intimidation. This was especially true for those whose lands were confiscated for sheep rearing in Scotland, those who escaped the famines in Ireland and those who fled because of political and religious beliefs from mainland Europe. Thus, the first waves of immigrants were radical in character. They were determined to establish a new world where they might be safe from persecution. Their desire for freedoms denied and full bellies created a thirst for democratic representation which they achieved in

Canada through Confederation. Ironically, Confederation devastated the Atlantic provinces. The slow decline of the Maritime economy which began in the 1890s was complete by the 1930s. The grinding poverty of the Maritimes, based on a series of events begun with Confederation, has been carefully concealed behind a constructed persona of the Maritimer as the embodiment of grit and fortitude with a simplicity engendered by their closeness to nature and the slow pace of life - slow paced due to the lack of work. This false image, like much of the cover up culture of North America, has been furthered by reducing life to dependence on media constructs. Small town life in the Maritimes is thus a sociological observer's dream come true, the walking dead gossip and pose on every street corner according to the latest sitcom. And yes, now you can buy everything you ever needed to believe in the security and safety of the body. Of course sometimes a neighbour shoots his wife and kids. Sometimes someone falls in love with another person's married partner. Sometimes a young girl is pregnant and single. There are a few ripples to add spice to the frozen codes of behaviour. The problem is that the Maritimes are locked into a grey area, not poor enough to generate revolution, they're also not prosperous enough to give change a chance to resonate. This grey area is strengthened by a full blown class structure. Small towns like Amherst are very dependent on the hierarchical value systems of old moneyed British decedents versus the more amorphous white collar middle class and workers with the blacks on the bottom.

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AT THIS POINT I MUST REMIND YOU that I am constructing an analysis based on memory. I left Amherst behind more than twenty years ago, although my brief returns have never revealed change in the good citizens. For the last fourteen years I have lived in Halifax, the political, commercial and cultural capital of the Maritimes. Halifax has experienced a very sophisticated growth over those years, at least for those controlling the flow of capital assets. Its economy has been diversified - the emphasis on the armed forces as a major economic unit has been dropped. For a moment it looked as if Halifax would experience a boom associated with oil exploration and exploitation, but this fizzled out in the mid 1980s. But the city did not return to the wasteland of the 1950s, when, while most of North America was experiencing the industrial expansion of the post-war years, Halifax had slumped into yet another depression. It was due to this depression that Halifax, ironically, has preserved some of its historical buildings and still has relatively clean air and water. Halifax is really small town Nova Scotia writ large. It is governed by the old family contract with old money, although there are a few wild cards such as the strong Irish Catholic influence and the newly formed power base of the black community.

HALIFAX HAS BOUGHT THE NORTH AMERICAN BELIEF that its place in the sun is a natural progression of an innate superiority of talent and hardware. The culture and emotional ethos of our pioneer ancestors are still embedded in the democratic institutions that supposedly govern us. However, we all know that they have been

buried under a new culture based on the surface application of glamour and violence. It would be foolish to consider this culture as completely negative and to repudiate it without trying to imagine a culture to replace it. We are all very very good at critique since most of us mature on a diet of irony and revolt. Generally our generation has produced images that concentrate on the past in the form of memory or stream of consciousness neo-narrative style within a critique of patriarchal, capitalist, sexist, racist society. We have been the gadflies of the state without having to drink our cup of hemlock - mainly because the state is so good at keeping our voices marginalized. In this sense it means that the places we inhabit are also marginalized. The new culture is only interested in the surface structure of pop slogans and the 3 second edit. Thought is evil. This is, of course, a generalization, but it means that to some extent the only places that are valid in our society are those associated with fun and sex. The roots of community which were typically grounded in the home, church and the school have been expropriated by film and video, especially in the form of commercial television. This is not necessarily a backward step for Western Culture since home, church and school have become cesspools of repression. What they offered in their best moments was that the individual was worthy of respect and worthy of a voice. Now even the state which was for a moment the bulwark of the individual has fallen to the siren voice of the marketplace.

OUR ELECTRICAL CULTURE HAS RULES WHICH

OVERRIDE THE NATURAL LAWS OF OUR OWN HUMAN FLESH. These natural laws, however we apply them to our artistic creations, lie at the beginning of consciousness. This consciousness creates a home for our human flesh which feeds sensations back to the human brain. Although the psychologists have begun to unlock the ways in which our minds construct experience and a sense of identity, there is still no more unknown entity than this mass of nerves and right and left hemispheric functions. We may crack the construction of stars and the infinitude of atomic particles, but we are babes when we begin to probe this last frontier. The brain gathers all contradictions under one roof: our fascism, our intolerance, our compassion, our loves and our hatreds. These constructs of inner/outer perceptions percolate and combine and blend in various combinations at various times in each one of us until the concept of a stable identity becomes ridiculous. How can we construct an analysis of the world out of these ceaseless contradictions? We can't and thus, the inner world of the brain will never find a home, except that the earth itself is our home. All our institutions are surrogate wombs. Only those who step outside of these fictions are able to construct new paradigms of community with the knowledge that these too will rot and die.

WE HAVE A SAYING IN THE MARITIMES that if the crash ever comes we will simply go on as before since we have lived with the crash since 1900. Our cultural ethos has been built on our external poverty and its attendant reality of death. This anguish

of mortality is found in death by drowning at sea, death by suffocation in the mines, death by freezing on the ice flows and in the lumber camps. Popular culture is also associated with the folk tales and songs of going down the road to seek economic stability in the main urban centres of Upper Canada and the New England States. This popular culture, although ignored by both the superficial cool of television and the equally cold shoulder of official high art, is the root of the authentic Maritime experience. Films as diverse as Bill MacGillivray's *Stations* and Alex Busby and David Coole's experimental road movie, *Jackass Johnny*, explore this metaphor of sensitivity to the individual and especially how the individual has withstood hard times. Videos by David Askeveld, Doug Porter, Liz MacDougall and Cathy Busby, however diverse in their temperament and content, are all united in their need to examine the basis of survival. However, this metaphor of the road and survival Maritime style is probably only a degree away from being expropriated by the stagnation of our system. Our alienated society needs every "shock" it can consume to try to remind itself of its existence. We are getting to the point where images of violence and glamour can no longer hold the passive viewer's attention. If in the Maritimes it wasn't so long ago that we were a community of individuals, it may be that we will awake sooner than most from the dead zone.

Photo by Bill MacGillivray, from Stations by Charles Clark

CULTURE, AESTHETIC AND OBSESSIONS



WINNIPEG FILM GROUP FILMS

MB DUGGAN
Sept. 89

A: A FEW ASSUMPTIONS:

- 1: It's better to build a case from individual examples and work towards generalizations than to start grand and work down.
- 2: Micro-cultures exist, with the same rules, tendencies and mechanisms as larger cultures.
- 2a: Corollary: The Winnipeg Film Group is a micro-culture whose character can be discovered through an examination of the films made here and how the people here talk about those films.
- 3: A culture is best revealed in the semi-conscious activities of its members.

3b: Corollary: If you want to know what the culture of the WFG is, ask:

- 1: What are the unspoken rules?
- 2: What judgements are made about films?
- 3: What language is used to describe films?
- 4: What do members use to differentiate between good and bad films?
- 5: What do the films have in common that the makers didn't deliberately put there?

B: A FEW DISCLAIMERS:

Being a filmmaker who is going to try to discuss the work of his compatriots (and his own work) has a few problems. It's arrogant to talk about your own work. It's

silly not to mention it, when you're one of the active filmmaking members of the co-operative. The only solution seems to be to treat your activities as a filmmaker as if they were produced by somebody else, to put them in the same (somewhat) objective light as the other work. I don't like all the films from the Film Group. Some of them strike me as vile, some as dumb, some as just plain bad. I also don't agree with all elements of the culture of the place. Some of its aspects make me mad, some make me embarrassed, some are just boring. However, I'll try to set my own values aside and describe what I see. I'll try to write down what I think the culture of the co-op is, and leave aside judgements about whether I think that culture is healthy or sick, robust or weak. It's absurd to think

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that I can step out of my own context like this, but the attempt is still worth making. There is no such thing as a single culture—not of a country, a province, or of a collective of artists. Treating the WFG as an entity means, inevitably, that you generalize and simplify. Hopefully, however, the generalizations are based on a fairly broad-based analysis of the work produced.

C: A FEW PERSONAL FEELINGS ABOUT MAKING FILMS AT THE WFG:

Having said all these things, I should start by saying that I feel a sense of joy at being part of the Winnipeg Film Group. It seems to me that we are creating work which is special, extraordinary and invigorating. Many people in Canada have hoped that, someday, English Canadian film would begin to produce dis-

amusing to have around for short periods of time, but not really 'our sort of people'. I do feel a kinship with the structure of other co-ops. The pooling of resources (not just money but equipment, distribution resources, public screening of work, and the general struggle to have our work seen) is, I think, one of the fundamental activities of Canadians that makes our culture distinctive. For me, the development of film and video co-operatives is an extension of the development of farm materials and farm marketing co-operatives on the Prairies.

D: THE 'CO-OPERATIVE' ASPECTS OF THE CO-OPERATIVE:

Being part of a co-operative, for us, doesn't seem to mean we make films co-operatively. In fact, we are the least co-operative group of filmmakers I've ever met. There is little of the communal creation on WFG films that commercial features and 1/2 hours employ. There is virtually no joint creation of ideas or scripts and almost no joint editing of films. People trade roles

(i.e.: "I'll carry lights on your film if you carry lights on mine.") only on first films and in workshops that are structured that way.

There are a surprising number of prima donnas at the Film Group. Some of them insist that they do all their own work—everything from writing the whole thing alone, to coming to pick up the grip equipment, to setting up the lights, to running the camera, to editing the film—all of it gets done by a single person.

Others fit themselves into the more traditional hierarchical structure of a larger film shoot. There are, however, just as insistent on retaining complete artistic prerogative on the shoot, often overseeing (and interfering with) the tiniest details of the shoot.

This sort of centralization of power on a film is accepted and, in some cases, applauded by the members. It is usually seen as a filmmakers' insistence on their own artistic integrity.

Of course, having absolute control allows for distinctive work to emerge. It also feeds the ego of those who define themselves as 'filmmakers'. It's an open

question whether or not the creation of extraordinary work justifies the behavior of miniature dictators.

E: THE RULES:

(All of these rules are, as nearly as I can tell, unspoken. They seem to operate but are never discussed.)

1: Judgement of films is conducted freely by all members.

After a premiere screening, members feel remarkably free to come up to filmmakers to criticize, praise or tear apart their work. The willingness to make judgements is something I haven't seen at openings of visual art, theatre, dance, poetry readings, or book launches. At premieres of these 'finer' arts, the 'creators' seem to get praised or ignored. What they don't get is all sorts of people willing to come up to them and discuss their work in great detail.

These discussions are not initiated only by other filmmakers or by people who might be considered film academics or critics. Everyone seems to feel free to make these judgements.

The judgements are often boiled down to whether or not a film is 'good' or 'bad' (with a few gradations between). The fact that a film is 'innovative' or 'difficult' or 'challenging' doesn't seem to cut much mustard.

2: Judgement is virtually never based on the contents of the films or on their larger social context.

In the 4 or 5 years I've been involved with the Film Group, I've never heard anyone ever discuss the message or point of a film. Political issues raised in films are never brought up. Their possible effect on a larger community is not raised. Issues of power (such as sexual inequality, native issues, class struggle) are simply not discussed. Even with films (such as *Downtime*, *Magdeline*, or *Mike*) where non-film issues are clearly present, they are simply not brought up.

3: Discussions tend to focus on technical questions.

Filmmakers are asked "How did you get this shot?" "Did you use a dolly in this shot?" "Was the editing planned out before-hand?" "Did you use available light?"

Questions of surprising detail regarding the lab and technical aspects of the print are hotly debated. "Wasn't the optical

THE FACT THAT A FILM IS 'INNOVATIVE' OR 'DIFFICULT' OR 'CHALLENGING' DOESN'T SEEM TO CUT MUCH MUSTARD.

tinctive, interesting work the way French-Canadian film and English-Canadian theatre has. I think that that is happening at the Film Group.

(I have no doubt that this is happening other places as well. By saying it's happening here I don't mean to imply that it's only happening here.)

But I make no bones about placing the films here in that larger, grandiose context. When I make films, I feel that I'm on a kind of mission. When I look at the films we make, I feel that we are doing something vital and important—something lots of people should know about. That sounds like pump and PR. Maybe it is. Maybe I've become so corrupted by our own hype that I'm no longer able to distinguish between fact and fiction. I may be wrong, time will tell. I feel the WFG is disconnected from other co-ops in Canada. We seem to operate from a different set of assumptions. Sometimes I feel we have different goals. It seems to me that we are like Americans on a boat cruise—we're the loud, excited, pushy folks. We blow our own horn. Other people see us as somewhat uncivilized. We're kind of

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track fuzzy?" "Isn't the lighting pretty cheezy on that interior?" "Isn't the print a little green on those basement shots?" (Interestingly, while this is not exactly the perfect way to generate critical and aesthetic debate, it is very useful for training filmmakers. The quizzing and discussions which go on seem to provide novice filmmakers with an immersion course in the craft of their work. The content and purpose of their work is pretty much left up to them.)

audience is deceptively simple. It has the advantage of being a testable standard of quality. If an audience is restless, talks or (disaster of disasters) walks out, the film is considered to be not as good as one where an audience sits mesmerized.

There is division on whether or not films should appeal to a broad cross-section of the public. But there is agreement that once the film is placed in front of an audience, if they sit there in rapt attention

would really buy that argument though.) No-one ever talks about the goal of their films. I've never heard anyone say seriously why they make films (or even why they made a particular film). There is little or no examination of the fundamental act of filmmaking; little examination of its primary motives. If it achieves the goal of holding an audience, that seems to be enough.

6: Competition between filmmakers is quite fierce and somewhat openly accepted.

There is little competition about funding. People seem open to giving tips on how to approach funders and where to go for innovative sources of cash, often helping other filmmakers who are competing directly against them for a source of funding. Budgets, plans

and ideas are shared with far more candor than I've ever seen in the commercial sector.

What happens to the film after it's produced is much more competitive. How big your premiere was, how positive the reviews are, how many festivals your film gets in (compared to how many mine got in). All of these form the basis of some fairly heated rivalries.

F: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FILMS:

1: The films have a suprisingly-high technical standard. Lighting, camera-work and editing tend to be fairly 'glossy', or at least carefully done.

There are a number of interesting technical quirks of WFG films that have a historical basis, are largely the result of luck, yet still strongly influence the overall nature of the films coming from the co-op.

Many of them are shot on a wind-up Bolex, using prime lenses. This is the equipment the co-op could afford about 5 years ago. It meant:

- a: Shots were usually less than 20 seconds long (often interrupting the flow of scenes).
- b: Images were quite sharp and precise.
- c: Voices were dubbed later, often using very crude dubbing facilities.

MOST OF THE PEOPLE IN THE FILMS ARE ALMOST PATHOLOGICALLY DISCONNECTED FROM THE OTHER PEOPLE IN THE FILM. I CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE WHO IS MARRIED OR WHO HAS ANY KIND OF RELATIONSHIP THAT IS MORE THAN FLEETING.

The corollary of this emphasis is fairly clear—few films are lauded which, while they have major technical problems, get across a social or political point.

4: There isn't much discussion of dealmaking.

Discussions among commercial filmmakers often seem to focus on 'the deal'—how a certain actor was 'got', how to approach funders, who is going to buy the film for what market. This rarely happens at the Film Group.

5: All films are judged on much the same scale.

No distinction is made between Canadian, American, other foreign, non-commercial, experimental or animated film. The assumptions about what makes a film 'good' or 'bad' are quite unthinkingly assumed to be the same in all cases.

(The same applies for videos. Most of the members would say that 'video has a different tradition and we have to judge it on its own merits'. Most of that is lip service. Almost none of us could say what that 'different tradition' was or what its 'own merits' might be.) Generally, most of the members seem to see videos as films with poor picture quality that need more editing.)

The differentiation between 'good' and 'bad' films seems to be between films which 'hold' an audience and films which don't. This emphasis on mesmerizing an

to every frame, the film is a success. If the audience reacts with discomfort, boredom or confusion, this is almost always considered to be a fault in the film, not a failing on the part of an audience.

(This, in some ways, strikes me as kind of sweet and touching. The assumption of dis-junction between creator and audience that is assumed with many other arts doesn't seem to operate at the WFG. I'm not sure why. But there is an abiding belief that an audience knows best somehow. Maybe it's an assumption that, no matter what, film is a popular art form. Placed in front of an interested audience, their judgement carries a lot of validity. Maybe it's just that we've never thought about what it means to make art in the 20th century.)

There seems to be little or no value judgements made between the various elements of film that will mesmerize an audience. Anything is fair game, so long as it achieves the desired result. Narrative line is obviously a pretty dependable way of doing the job. So are flashy edits, bright colours, catchy music, shock, humour, and beautiful images. All of them get used.

(I suppose, if you wanted to push this, we could say that this is typically post-modernist. All elements are considered of equal value—everything is available. I don't think anyone at the Film Group

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Many of the films consequently had little dialogue, often relying on a filmmaker voiceover. This can be seen especially in much of Paiz's work, Maddin's films, *The Milkman Cometh* and *The Guinea Pig Age*. When there was dialogue, it created a disconnection between image and sound, emphasizing to an audience that they were seeing 'a film' and not 'real life' and keeping them at an emotional distance.

We never had a good tripod and head (much less a dolly or a steadicam). This meant that: Most of the shots are static, framed images, with action happening inside them. This produces a distinctive sense of rigidity and stasis. It also provides an audience with a sense of looking in a window and emphasizes their role as voyeurs.

We have always had editing suites available for virtually no cost. This has meant that filmmakers had plenty of time to experiment in the editing suite. The editing is often the strongest part of a film, showing more distinctiveness and innovation than the genre, the story or the characteristics of the actual shoot (*Mike* is a good example of a film where the other elements of the film are noticeably weaker than the editing and are overpowered by it.)

2: Unlike almost any other film cultures (at least in English Canada), the co-operative sector in Winnipeg dominates the commercial. Public and media attention, awards and volume of production has almost always been greater in the co-op than in the rest of the province's film activities. The importance of this role reversal can't be over-emphasized. It has meant that co-op members know their films will be examined in public and will be commented on by people outside their circle—they will have an audience, composed primarily of non-filmmakers and non-Film Group members. It also means that the competition for crew members is reversed—there is more prestige in working on an 'art' film than there is in turning a good buck in TV commercials. Finally, it reinforces the arrogance of WFG filmmakers.

3: The films tend to be quite ambitious. The filmmakers are often extraordinarily arrogant, tackling big subjects (death in *Dead Father*, love in *The Obsession of Billi Botski*) with little or no apparent fear and no recognition that prudence would urge them to pick a more modest topic.

4: There is a strong emphasis on narrative.

(This may follow somewhat from the presence of a non-filmmaker-based audience and on the desire to mesmerize that audience.)

As discussed above, any technique which holds an audience seems to be

ries from Shereen Jerrett, Leon Johnson and Victor Dobchuk), but it has never been the bulk of our work. There has been some animation. It seems to be primarily non-narrative.

Despite the narrative tradition, there is little emphasis on naturalism. You rarely forget that these are actors on a screen (often stiff, amateur, hokey actors). The sets are, in many cases, clearly artificial and many of the conversations are set-pieces.

The narratives all seem somewhat twisted somehow. There are only 2 straight narrative films that I'm aware of (*Washing Machine* and *Monster in the*



fine. Narrative (plot, story, situation, character, complications) has proven a fairly reliable way to interest a crowd in a performance over the last few centuries, and it's one that tends to dominate the films from the Film Group.

Much of the discussion about films before they are made focuses on the technical aspects of story construction—where are the plot points, will the audience care about the characters, how do the acts fit together. There is a fairly strong understanding of how traditional film story-telling works.

There is a strong minority tradition of non-narrative (experimental films from Grant Guy and MB Duggan, documenta-

Coal Bin). All the rest have some sort of spin on them. Even though the films acknowledge the traditions of film story-telling, few of the filmmakers seem content with simply reworking them.

5: Humour plays a very strong role.

The humour tends to be black (*Dead Father* is a particularly clear example of this) and quite cruel. Satire is present but, again, it is de-politicized.

6: There is a strong pride in doing things on a low budget.

A film made for \$5,000 will be more highly regarded than an equally good one made for \$20,000. There is a strong sense of arrogance that our films are made for less than comparable,

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commercial work.

(I'm not sure why this is. Maybe it's making a virtue of necessity. Maybe it's the chippiness of being the small kid on the block. Maybe it's the Winnipeg pride in always buying wholesale.)

7: There is little reference to other Canadian films.

Few members know much about Canadian films. The 4 or 5 people who

In a few cases where minor characters may be in a stable relationship (the girl's parents in *Crime Wave*, for example) they are heavily caricatured.

There are a few parent-child relationships (*Monster in the Coal Bin*), but these almost always seem to be suffering some sort of disruption.

Considering the fact that most of the filmmakers come from middle-class

backgrounds, there is surprisingly little depiction of typical middle class life.

10: What the films are about:

(This is a fairly grandiose idea—that I'll sum up all the films in one sentence. But let's try.)

Winnipeg Film Group films are about obsessions. Given how many films have been made, the variety of styles, the diversity of

filmmakers, and the refusal to discuss content, it's surprising that they have much in common at all. But the list of films (both good and bad) which have obsession as their animating structure is quite long:

The Obsession of Billi Botski (a young man obsessed with a female icon)

Washing Machine (a professor obsessed with his washing machine)

Crime Wave (a script writer obsessed with creating the perfect colour crime movie)

Swanson's Nightmare (an account is obsessed with finding out who is trying to kill him)

Watcher (a man is obsessed with slasher films)

Running Time (a man obsessed with running marathons)

Celestial Matter (a double obsession: going to the moon and punishing heretics)

Routines (the obsession of daily routines)

Horsewomen (women who are obsessed with horses)

The Milkman Cometh (a man obsessed with a milk can)

Tunes 'A Plenty (a basement band obsessed with artistic integrity)

Tales from the Gimli Hospital (two men obsessed by the same woman)

Mike (a mental health patient obsessed with explaining his view of the world to the people around him)

When Worlds' Collide (good old boys obsessed with hockey)

(The list goes on, but you get the picture.)

This may simply be a useful rhetorical device, someone could probably argue that all films are about obsessions. But it does serve as a useful structure for WFG filmmakers to organize their activities. Obsession is usually non-verbal, so it allows us to dispense with most dialogue.

It is often focused on a visual fetish, so it allows us to illustrate the obsession in a filmic way.

Obsession is a singular activity, allowing us to dispense with interaction between actors.

It has connections with mental illness, allowing us to indulge our penchant for a fairly shallow surrealism.

It allows us to poke fun at our characters. It provides us with a simple film metaphor for the activity of filmmaking itself. Why should this be? An interesting question and one I'm not sure I have an answer to.

The only idea I've been able to come up with is pretty weak: An obsessional behaviour and attitude is exactly what we want our audience to have towards our films—we want them to sit there spell-bound. So we construct an obsession on the screen in the hope that, somehow, our characters' attitudes will rub off on our audience. It's almost like a primitive kind of magic. This explanation seems very flimsy, but it's the best I've been able to come up with so far.

Photos: page 24, *The Milkman Cometh*; page 27, *Monster in the Coal Bin*; this page, *Crime Waves*.



do know about other Canadian films are extraordinarily well-informed. But their information isn't well-disseminated at the co-op.

There is little or no interest in the tradition of docu-dramas. The few documentaries that are made such as *Taking a Walk with Dad*, *Horsewomen*, *Child Actors* (all in progress) and *When Worlds' Collide* and *Death: The Impossible Escape* are the most de-politicized documentaries imaginable. Even where the possibility for a feminist critique seems obvious (*Horsewomen*), it is either subdued or absent.

8: There is almost no leftist or radical tradition.

This sets us apart from the mainstream of Canadian non-commercial film. In some way, I think, it's what causes the greatest distance between us and other co-ops.

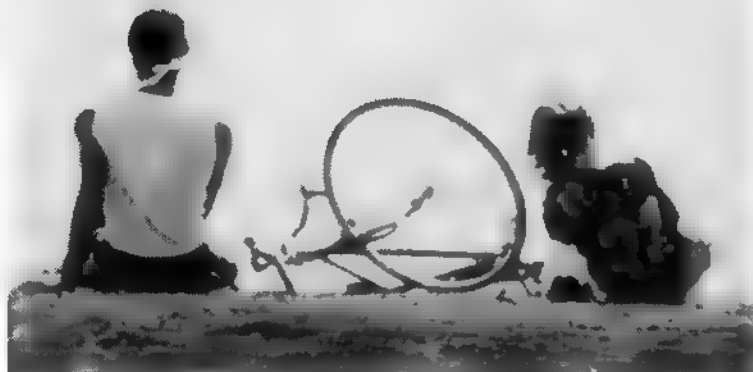
9: There are no relationships.

Most of the people in the films are almost pathologically disconnected from the other people in the film. I can't think of anyone who is married or who has any kind of relationship that is more than fleeting.

LEAVING THE THEATRE

OUTLOOKS FROM ELSEWHERE

FLATLAND



W. SCHEFF

ALTHOUGH widely varying in style, independent Saskatchewan-made films do share two or three thematic similarities: isolation, alienation, and a reappraisal of the environment. These themes have much in common with the predominant themes of Canadian art, but Saskatchewan films exemplify a strongly individual and regional approach to such themes.

WITHIN the context of film co-op production on the prairies, Saskatchewan films are quite distinctive in comparison with productions from Calgary and Winnipeg. Whereas the Winnipeg Film Group is developing low-budget 16mm narrative-based black comedies, specifically in the work of John Paizs, Guy Maddin and John Kozak, Regina seems to be defining itself as the major centre for experimental filmmaking on the prairies. The Regina-based filmmakers Richard Kerr and Chris Gallagher (Gallagher lived in Regina through the mid-80s, then returned to Vancouver in 1988) are nationally known and, along with Jean Oser at the University of Regina have laid solid groundwork for a personal and perceptual avant-garde cinema. Visits and screenings by filmmakers Bruce Baillie, James Benning, Joyce Wieland, Stan Brakhage and others have exposed Regina filmmakers to important work both of historical and contemporary

North American avant-garde cinemas.

THE narrative-based experimental/performance films produced at the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers are also markedly different from Filmpool films. While the productions of the Calgary and Regina co-ops do share similar themes (notably our association with media and technology) their approach to these issues could not be more different. It is impossible to locate any specific sense of place in the CSIF productions of Berg, Berquist and Bienvenue - we find ourselves trapped in an anonymous urban environment overwhelmed by media, technology and internationalism. The Saskatchewan Filmpool productions, when touching on these concerns, do so from a more personal and distinctively regional orientation. Joanne and Steve Reilly's *Message for Shamus* and Gerald Saul/Brian Stockton's *Wheat Soup*, for example, locate the influence of media and technology within a distinctive prairie setting. Before discussing individual productions from the Saskatchewan Filmpool let us first retrace the history of this filmmakers' co-operative.

THE Saskatchewan Filmpool Co-operative began in the fall of 1976 on the set of Alan King's independent feature film *Who Has Seen The Wind* which was shot in Arcola, Saskatchewan. Six local filmmakers including Don List, Charles

FILMS

Konowal, Ian Preston, Brock Stevens, Bill Mills and Gerald Home, approached Francoyse Picard of the Canada Council with the idea of forming a Saskatchewan based film co-op. A \$2,000 grant was received to undertake a feasibility study for the establishment of a film co-op in Regina. Will Woods was employed on this study, out of which came the incorporation documents for the Filmpool. On March 16, 1977 the Saskatchewan Filmpool was officially incorporated. The Filmpool's original function was as an equipment access centre for local filmmakers. As membership grew, expanded services such as film production assistance, workshops and basic equipment training,

a newsletter - *SPLICE*, exhibition programmes and distribution services were added to the Filmpool's activities. In order to establish a broader provincial base a second office was opened in Saskatoon.

DURING the early 1980s the Photographer's Gallery in Saskatoon ran an annual Super-8 film festival and in 1984 staged a video production workshop which created video access facilities for videomakers in Saskatoon. Through the mid-1980s, Nora Gardner organized video workshops in Regina. These workshops, which were organized alternatively through Filmpool and Neutral Ground, with assistance from Cable Regina, brought in videomakers and teachers from Calgary, Winnipeg, Vancouver, New York and Scotland. Unfortunately these workshops generated little enthusiasm among co-op filmmakers. In the past year a video group has formed in Saskatoon; it now seems likely that Saskatoon will become Saskatchewan's centre for video art and that Regina will remain a filmmaking centre.

DON List and Charles Konowal guided Filmpool through the early years and initiated a lot of activity. Given Saskatchewan's impressive social history: the birthplace of the C.C.F., election of Tommy Douglas, establishment of a socialist economy and society, the first

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arts council in North America (Saskatchewan Arts Board) and the pioneering social documentaries made in Saskatchewan by Evelyn Cherry from the early 1940s through to the late 1970s, one might expect a Saskatchewan film co-op to be inclined towards socialist realist documentary. From its earliest years however, Filmpool has drawn people to it who were interested in producing short, expressive, indigenous, experimental and dramatic films. The founding members of the co-op, Don List, Charles Konowal, Bill Mills, Ian Preston and Brock Stevens did however produce some strong documentary films. The most notable of these are Charles Konowal's striking film of the Ukrainian/Saskatchewan poet Andrew Suknaski *Passing Shadows* (once referred to as a 'Ukrainian voodoo film') and the Birdsong Co-op produced *Folks Call Me Tommy*.

FILMPOOL has created a strong sense of community for Saskatchewan filmmakers, initiating workshop productions (*Kori and Rita* in Saskatoon and *Jimmy's Game* in Regina) as well as providing assistance, equipment and distribution for young filmmakers. Just how strong this community is becomes apparent when one notices the crossover of personal styles in different films. In the early years the founding members often worked together on each others films. More recently we can see a similar carry over in the films of Gerald Saul, Brian Stockton, Angelos Hatzitolios, Spyro Egarhos and Will Dixon. Young filmmakers, drawn to the Filmpool for its facilities and community, initially began working on narrative based dramatic films. As their confidence and knowledge increases they become more aware of the possibilities of independent filmmaking, their work becomes more adventurous in its incorporation of experimental techniques.

FILMPOOL films are unified by a literalness - a refusal to abandon a realistic depiction of nature. Whatever sense of irony or despair most of these films evince, they are emblematic of hope and faith. The films propose neither transcendence nor abstraction but, instead, attempt a pragmatic engagement with the 'real' world.

GIVEN Saskatchewan's strong tradition of literary and visual arts ranging across internationalist (The Regina Five), naive realist (W.C. McCargar et al) and Native Indian art (Ed Poitras, Bob Boyer), there is a richness and variety in that province's art history which remains untapped by local filmmakers. But this is not only true of Saskatchewan independent films. An ironic or dismayed recording of themes of isolation and alienation are a general fact of Canadian independent film. The use of landscape as a motif of alienation is an interesting aspect of Canadian films. The unwillingness or inability of Canadian filmmakers to engage the formal features of the cinematic apparatus which these messages can be mediated through is, however, worrisome. The projection of these images, their mechanical reworking or possible sound/image dialectics are rarely explored. It is as if so many Canadian filmmakers have fallen into despair over the marginality of their place and vocation that they have taken the soft option of alienation within landscape without developing a systematic cinematic aesthetic through which these concerns could be mediated. Such an aesthetic would create a way of composing moving images which may help the viewer to make the imaginative and conceptual shift to a way of seeing which offers some hope for a different future.

ARTISTS have a privilege and responsibility as the protectors and interpreters of culture. We stand between history and the future, making representations of this time, based on the knowledge of our culture, for future generations. To be artists, we must believe in the future of humanity and work, in this time, to insure the survival of our species. It is not through feelings of impotence and alienation that our future will be realized but through concrete cultural and spiritual action which creates a living example of an art which can create hope in history.

IN a province with a native tradition stretching back over 20,000 years, and whose Native Indians comprise a significant percentage of the population, what representation is given to native faces and culture? Almost none at all. While white Canadian artists have catalogued their sense of alienation from

a death-dealing landscape, the alienation of the Native Indian has been not from nature but from a white culture which has not reconciled itself to this place. Shall we understand the work of independent filmmakers in Saskatchewan as a part of this oppression? The Native Indian artist has traditionally been concerned with presenting a unified oneness between humans and nature. For the native artist both world and artist are integrated subjects of representation. Nature is sought in oneself, rather than employed as a motif. Surely, to finally become 'at home' here, this is the sensibility that we few generations of immigrant culture also need to develop.

THE visual arts in Canada have given us, for some time now, in the work of Emily Carr, Daphne Odjig, Jane Ash Poitras, Ed Poitras, Bob Boyer, and others, such a powerful synthesis of European and Native Indian sensibility that we may hope that Canadian film artists will soon begin to reappraise their own dismay within a new understanding of native traditions and practise. The conceptual shift that will allow intercultural filmmaking to develop will work from post-modernism to post-colonialism. This necessary acceptance will lead to a redefinition of place, from separation to unity, from loss to gain, and the transference of guilt from Christian abstractions to an acknowledgment of our plunder of this continent.

BUT perhaps I ask too much from a young film community. The works from the Saskatchewan Filmpool co-operative are films which have arisen from a place where filmmakers work against tremendous obstacles, out of the immense cultural and economic domination of eastern Canada and the United States, small funding and a slight history of filmmaking. Despite these difficulties strong filmmaking has arisen on the prairies. The independent productions of the Saskatchewan Filmpool Co-operative offers to Canadians who care about their culture enough to put aside the hollowness of market driven media, the opportunity to see an indigenous body of work which resists the compromises of the film industry and seeks to create a unique western Canadian cinema.

Photo, page 29: Wheat Soup

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NY

LETTER

OUTLOOKS FROM ELSEWHERE

TOM CHOMONT

I'M NOT A CRITIC, REVIEWER OR SCHOLAR. THE FOLLOWING ARE JUST SOME OBSERVATIONS, SOME PERSONAL REACTIONS HASTILY JOTTED DOWN. I wanted to use the opportunity to note some films/filmmakers who might not be as widely known as others I like a lot, but for which there is much written and observed already. There has been a growing feeling of resurgence, a flowering of creative energy in the lower Manhattan area. It just feels very good, very alive, very reaffirming amidst staggering forces of death and destruction. So here goes, a few random fragments, some scribbles on a memo pad by the door.

LEWIS KLAHR'S HER FRAGRANT EMULSION IS AN EXTRAORDINARY ODE simultaneously to the film actress Mimsy Farmer and to the film medium itself. As the title implies, Farmer is approached through her elusive celluloid-based image. All of the images and most of the dialogue in the film seem to be taken from the feature *Road To Salina*. They are cut into strips and run concurrently and in overlapping shreds moving in the frame, with the emulsion/image frequently stripped away to reveal the naked celluloid. The fragments are both tantalizing and elusive. The metaphorical meaning is erotic in impulse but transcendent in implication. The beloved, as in Sufi and troubador verse, is unattainable and illusory, an occasion for celebrating and praising enlightenment.

The images preceding the main title are not easily recognizable, emphasizing the qualities of the emulsion itself. And these aspects of image permeate the film, reminding us how transient and fragile the reality of the images and emotions evoked really are. The images consist of movie



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star close-ups and adoring images of the screen actress running, talking, gazing, and in amorous embrace. They are like collective snapshots of a love affair, encompassing adoration, frustration,



consummation and remembered scenes. But the images are deteriorated and shredded, disappearing from the screen and sound like memories or fragments of memories. Both the fulfillment and disillusion of love are glimpsed. The experience is both bewildering and evocative, creating an impetus toward a state of contemplation. The beloved becomes both a movie image to adore and to identify with, a cipher and a symbol for both other and self which are continually slipping away, leading us to contemplate the material and the means by which we see and perceive them both in projection and in our mind.

FOUR FILMS BY M.M. SERRA, WHICH COMPRISE her total work to date (she is currently working on a collaboration based on a screenplay by a friend and also on a film utilizing imagery rephotographed from X-rated feature films), are: *NYC*, *Turner*, *PPH*, *Tree*. They are all very short (under four minutes) and finely edited. *NYC* is a diary, a visitor's view of Manhattan's Midtown constructed of television images, neon lights at night, etc. - almost a moving postcard, conveying both the snapshot quality and the

anecdotal comment. *Tree* is the only one of the four in black and white and has a different mood from the rest, rather semiotic in its juxtaposing of the written word 'tree' with views of trees and earth seen at night by the light of a flashlight which selectively reveals and limits the image in the frame. *PPH* evokes choreographic metaphors for the film's construction. An Edison (?) hand-colored film of a female dancer in billowing costume opens the film and recurs. Images of colorful ribbons are moved and arranged in sunlight over steps as though in woven patterns through the film, also serving as references to the strips of film overlapped in editing. The ribbons are also echoes of the hand-colored patterns made by the cloth and also suggest dances like the Maypole circular dance in which each participant holds the end of a ribbon with the other end attached to the top of the May

pole. *Turner* evokes the sunlit sharp lines of a painter or photographer's rendition of the California coast, a woman's face resembling Marilyn Monroe and a dog licking a woman's legs. It is Hollywood and sunny daydreaming but on repeated viewing the images hinge on each other in disturbingly partial reference to an erotic daydream that is part mask and part threat beneath the lulling surface.

NICK ZEDD'S WORK I'VE SEEN ONLY at his Museum of Modern Art screening. All of the films at MOMA except *Whoregasm* were rooted in straightforward storytelling conventions, including home-movie and news variations. At the same time each film had a subversive element that either deliberately mismatched points of reference or distanced the illusionary screen reality from the filmmaking reality. In one film made during the U.S. presidential primary race between Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter, an actor portraying an intelligence-operative defector confesses to a clandestinely placed camera. This leads to a scene of an actor in a rubber Jimmy Carter mask bound to a chair who has a

finger cut bloodily from a patently fake prosthetic hand (although an exposed bone looks real enough - like a chicken bone, perhaps) to illustrate a plot to clone Carter from his finger and run the clone for president. Zedd commented that this was to sabotage the Carter election.

In *Thrust in Me* Zedd plays a suicidal woman alone in her East Village apartment and her boyfriend. She steps into the tub nude and slits her wrists while looking at a picture of Jesus she's taped to the wall next to the toilet. Her boyfriend (Zedd) returns to the apartment but seems not to notice her (Zedd) in the tub. He pulls down his pants to sit on the toilet, pulling the picture from the wall to wipe his ass when he's finished. When he finally does see the body in the tub he pulls out his cock and fucks the mouth, pulling out to cum exceedingly long and plentifully. The sexist macho of all this is given a strange twist because Zedd plays both the woman and the man.

Whoregasm is 60s psychedelia, at MOMA projected in slightly overlapping side-by-side double image. The same combination of genderbender and toeing the line sexuality operates here as in many of the other films; Zedd is seen dressed as a woman, exposes his male genitalia with intercuts of magazine photos of partial transsexuals (men with both breasts and cocks - a subgenre of eroticism sometimes touted by the industry as 'chicks with dicks') but then he functions pretty much in the standard topping position with women. It disorients the role playing enough to break convention but without losing the convention, which is pretty much a statement about the films in general. The transgression requires that the works also preserve what it is that is being transgressed. In a time when critics state that David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* and Yvonne Rainer's *The Man Who Envied Women* (both films I like a lot) have erased the line between mainstream and avant-garde, Zedd's rude individuality is both as refreshing and annoying as say Maryse Holder (see *A Winter Tan*).

A FILMMAKER WHOSE WORK I HAVE FOLLOWED over a period of some ten years is Gary Adlestein who lives in

LEAVING THE THEATRE

Pennsylvania between Reading and Allentown. He has worked largely in super-8 but also in 16mm. Two of my very favorites are very conceptually simple but highly effective and elegant studies he shot during a visit to Italy. *To Capri* shows a continuous pan over a landscape in which people move in the pan's direction towards a dock where they all converge to board a boat to the

been very well attended. This year two of these series were projected at Anthology Film Archives. The first was the *Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival* in its third year under the directorship of Sarah Schulman (author of *After Delores* and other novels) and Jim Hubbard (filmmaker whose moving *Elegy In The Street* premiered at this year's festival). The second to take place was the How

manipulated about the screen while a narrator befuddles the identity of viewer and viewed, sweeping out the guard (superego/censor) in our own minds.

The Cocoran-Mapplethorpe-Hilton Kramer-Helms flap has gotten a lot of juices boiling, too, reminding the artists how vulnerable they are, especially if they rely on the kindness of strangers.

Views vary on the issues raised but it seems to be part of the resurgence that issues are being discussed and perceived as relevant again.

I HAVE JUST BEGUN TO SEE THE WORK OF **BRADLEY EROS** whose imagery evokes the erotic on a mythic, cosmic-consciousness level, encompassing tribal and religious art elements. Much like an extension of the psychedelic and yogic seekers of the 60s, his work employs multiple exposures of the body in an increasingly outward/inward awareness context that has much appeal and truth in it when done with this sincerity and insight. The first piece of his I saw was *Soma Sema*, a live performance (later a film) in which a male and female (he and Jenny Liotta) wrapped as mummies

unwind towards the audience still attached by the unwound ribbons to a single point in the background. Slides of organic and galactic textures are projected over the figures and on a background screen and at one point a blazing fire is ignited on the floor of the stage and rises up from a quartered circle of fire.

Photos: page 31, Her Fragrant Emulsion by Lewis Klahr; page 32, Soma Sema by Jeanne Liotta/Bradley Eros; this page, Room In his Heart by Gary Adlestein.



island of Capri. *Sorrento* is set in a city of the same name, looking out through Venetian shutters into a narrow street beyond, both the shots and slats breaking sound and image. (These films parallel, from a very different sensibility, his wife Linda Adlestein's delicately observed and hand-tinted photographs taken in Italy, primarily in Rome and Florence.) A third most remarkable film is a dramatic narrative adaptation of Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts*. Adlestein's film version (faithful in spirit and surprisingly in text as well) is called *Room In His Heart*.

THERE IS ALSO AN EXPLOSION OF OVERTLY LESBIAN AND GAY experimental work, the programs of which have

Do I Look series presented by the Collective For Living Cinema. Jim and Sarah's festival usually takes place at Millennium. This year both Millennium and Collective are undergoing renovations.

Among outstanding works at these festivals that might not be known there are **Leandro Katz's** gorgeous four-image black and white homage to Charles Ludlam's production of *The Grand Tarot* (called *Reel Six*); **Jerry Tartaglia's** *Ecce Homo* which reworks the guard/repressor/voyeur motif from Genet's classic film *Un Chant D'Amour*, evolving from the artful erotica of that film into explicit male/male porno images all framed in fields of pure color and

LEAVING THE THEATRE

WORKING THE MARGIN

IN THE CITY OF LIGHT

JOHN GAGNÉ

I'M THREE MONTHS BACK FROM A YEAR OVERSEAS AND I'VE BEEN ASKED TO BANG OFF A few pages on what happened with regard to film. Nine months in Paris and three months all over the map filled four large manuscripts, a day book, and literally a suitcase of papers, working notes, train schedules, pamphlets, advertisements, programmes, letters, every damned thing. I have DETAILS!

But I am at a loss right now as to what to say. In a resonant sense the year still looms large on the horizon. And much that occurred with regard to film occurred with regard to very good people (very good times). I wouldn't know how as yet to choose and distill and sever. So I'll deal with the impressions, the velocity, and I'll try to keep it straight. Glean from this what you may and know that ...

GETTING THERE WAS A BITCH A MAZE OF PAPER
FORMS PHOTOS QUESTIONS MEDICALS OFFICIAL
STAMPS FOR OFFICIAL STAMPS I WAS HEADING FOR
THE EIGHT MONTH VISA AT THE SORBONNE I SOLD
EVERYTHING GAVE MY CAT FIVER TO A FRIEND ONLY
SIOBHAN CAME TO THE AIRPORT AND I LEFT

LANDED 150F AWAY FROM HOTEL DE MEDICI AT RUE
SAINT-JACQUES I BOUGHT A LECONTE STREET GUIDE
AND WALKED A WEEK WAITING FOR THE SORBONNE TO
START UP OVER THE BALCONY OVER THE CLAMOUR I
WATCHED EUROPEANS

INTO THE SORBONNE IT'S BABYLON IT'S ITALIANS
GERMANS GREEKS SWEDES FINNS DANES DUTCH
AMERICANS CANADIANS AND A GIRL FROM MEXICO WHO
WILL LOVE PATRICK AND INTO A SMALL CHAMBRE DE
BONNE NEAR THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE WITH A DECID-
EDLY MAD COUNTESS DE PAZZIS AS MY LANDLADY WHO
WILL EXTORT ONE HOUR A WEEK OF ENGLISH FOR HER
GIRLS AS RENT CONDITION I SAY YES THE FIRST SUN-
DAY ONE GIRL FLEES THE ROOM THE OTHER SHOUTS

"CONNASSE!" AT THE COUNTESS THE FATHER IS
SCARCE THE GRANDFATHER POURS ME A COGNAC
AND ASKS QUESTIONS ABOUT CANADA AND OFFERS
OPINIONS ABOUT THE QUEBECOIS IN THE HALL MADAME
DE PAZZIS AND HER COIFF ARE COMING UNDONE I HEAR
BANGING AND WE PAUSE OVER OUR COGNACS

I CALL YANN BEAUVAIS AT LIGHT CONE ONE AFTER-
NOON AN APPOINTMENT IN THE BASTILLE I'M IN A CAB
GOING TO RUE DE LAPPE WITH THREE FILMS SOME
ONE-SHEETS COUPURES DE PRESSE FOR WHAT IT'S
WORTH AND THE PROJECTOR IS UP AFTER A BIT OF
TALK WHICH IS IN SOME WAYS PERFUNCTORY SOME
WAYS LIMITED BY MY FRENCH HIS ENGLISH SOME WAYS
THOUGH VERY COMFORTABLE VERY COMFORTABLE HE
THREADS rattle AND name your poison it's a scream channel
no. five AND the mystery of carl e. lafong WHICH IS INTER-
RUPTED BY THE DOOR BECAUSE YES IT'S MILES
MCKANE WHO'S A LONG WAY FROM PALMERSTON
NORTH AND SANDRA REID HIS FELLOW EX-PATRIOT OF
NEW ZEALAND AND I DON'T REALIZE THAT MILES IS THE
OTHER HALF OF LIGHT CONE OF THIS APARTMENT BUT

LEAVING THE THEATRE

OUTLOOKS FROM ELSEWHERE

IT IS GEORGEOUS MILES THERE'S TEA AND COOKIES AND I KNOW I'M NERVOUS BUT I DO LIKE WHERE I AM YANN COMMENTS ON THE TENDENCY OF CANADIAN FILMMAKERS TOWARDS THE LANDSCAPE BUT I DON'T SEE THE CONNECTION WITH MY FILMS

MUCH LATER OR THAT SAME AFTERNOON I ASK YANN ABOUT BUYING A SIXTEEN MILLIMETER CAMERA AND HE SUGGESTS BOULEVARD BEAUMARCHAIS WHICH I FIND IS LINED WITH ALL MANNER OF CINEMA AND PHOTOGRAPHY STORES I WALK IT AND LOOSE MY BREATH ARRIFLEX BEAULIEAU BOLEX EIGHT SIXTEEN-THIRTY-FIVE LINED UP ON SHELVES STACKED IN WINDOWS IN A DREAM AND I BUY THE BEST BOLEX YOU CAN GET FOR 2800F

I TEST THE CAMERA ONE NIGHT SHOOTING IN MY ROOM SHOOTING PICASSO ART CARDS ANIMATING CIGARETTES RACING TOWARDS MY LAMP I USE A FORK TO REVERSE THE FILM TRYING SUPERIMPOSITIONS BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE THE KEY FROM SWITZERLAND AAAH

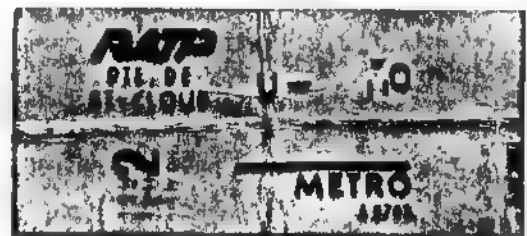
LIGHT CONE RUNS SIX HUNDRED PLUS EXPERIMENTAL FILMS RUNS SCRATCH CINEMA AT L'ENTREPOT IN THE FOURTEENTH LIGHT CONE WORKS OFTEN IN TANDEM WITH LA CINEMATHEQUE FRANCAISE AND CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU THE SHOW "MOT: DITE IMAGE" WAS ON AT CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU THREE WEEKS I FIGURE OF EXPERIMENTAL FILM DEALING WITH THE WORD IN FILM MY FIRST SHOT AT DUCHAMP'S anemic cinema RAINER'S the story of a woman who ... VANGUARD OF THE LETTRISTES LEMAITRE'S films imaginaires NELSON'S bleu shut YANN'S vo/id SNOW'S so is this CLOSED THE SHOW THERE WAS A GREAT BOOK OF WORDS PUT TOGETHER BY YANN AND MILES WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY ALAIN-ALCIDE SUDRE LAURENT DANET FILMMAKERS FRIENDS THEORETICIANS ALL SOMEONE TELLS ME YANN IS AN INTELLECTUAL WHICH MAKES SENSE BUT IT'S NEWS TO ME

THE SCREENING OF THE FILMS I BROUGHT FROM CANADA IS SET FOR FEBRUARY AT SCRATCH SCRATCH DOES TWO SHOWS A NIGHT TWICE A MONTH THIS WILL BE A SHOW OF NEW WORK I FIGURE I'M ON THE MAP

THE IDEA FOR *staccato* COMES ALL AT ONCE AND INTERRUPTS MY EVENING COMPLETELY BLACK AND WHITE LOVE SEX DEATH IN PARIS THREE ONE HUNDRED FOOT ROLLS SILENT UNCUT AS DISCIPLINE AS NECES

SITY WORKING THE FILM FRAME BY FRAME I SCRIBBLE OUT THE FIRST SPARKS THEN FILL IN THE DETAILS THINKING TITLES SHOTS LIGHT I CAN'T CONTAIN MYSELF I KNOW IT WILL WORK

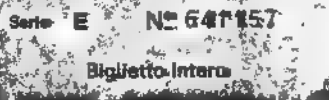
I SHOOT PART ONE *esmeralda* AT NOTRE-DAME I'M READING HUGO'S "NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS" AND QUASIMODO HAS IT BAD MY FRIEND PIETER STEMERDING OF HOLLAND ASSISTS IT'S NOVEMBER IT'S COLD WINDY WITH A CHANCE OF RAIN IT RAINS AND HE'S KEEPING



MY NUMBERS STRAIGHT WITH TWO PENS SIX HOURS SHOOTING FOR UNE BOBINE THEN OFF TO A UNIVERSITY RESTAURANT FOR HOT CHEAP FOOD THEN LABORATOIRES NEYRAC THEN RUE DE LAPPE TO SCREEN THE THING YANN SAYS "FRANCAIS" MILES SAYS

LEAVING THE THEATRE

"CUBISTE" THEN INTO A CAFE WITH PIETER A BLACK BOX CAFE TO HAVE SOME AND TALK AND SMOKE



DECEMBER FALLS AND ABIGAIL CHILD HAS A ONE-WOMAN SHOW AT SCRATCH BUT SHE'S SHOUTING AND SLAMMING DOORS AND PROVES HERSELF AN INCREDIBLE BITCH VISUAL JAZZ SHE SAYS AND I LIKE IT FOR A WHILE I HAVE ANKE WITH ME FROM BELGIUM AND WE SIT BACK FOR A LONG NIGHT AND AFTER YANN AND MILES GO IMMEDIATELY TO GREECE TO SPETSAI PIETER GOES TO HOLLAND KAREN THE GERMAN TO MANNHEIM EVERYONE GOES EVERYWHERE LA BELGE AND I GO NEXT DOOR WHERE THE BARTENDER IS POURING ME SCOTCH LIKE IT'S AN APERITIF I'M WRECKED WALKING TO HER PLACE DOING CASABLANCA DOING ALL THE PARTS SHE HASN'T SEEN IT SHE'S GETTING US LOST WITH MY LECONTE I DO THE SCENE WHERE INGRID BERGMAN SAYS KISS ME LIKE IT'S THE LAST TIME AND HER ARM FALLS ONTO THE TABLE AND KNOCKS OVER THE

GLASS NEXT DAY BRASSERIE RABBIT WITH MOM WHO DOES ONE-WOMAN THEATRE PERFORMANCES ALL OVER THE WORLD AND MOM TAKES HER BACK TO BELGIUM TO DE PINTE

BY SEVEN IN THE MORNING I'M IN GARE DU NORD AND ANNA PROULZ FROM MONTREAL WHO MAKES FILMS ABOUT RED AND GREEN JEWELS IS THERE I'M HAVING PARIS SHOCK AFTER CLOCKWORK GERMANY BUT IT PASSES BECAUSE IT'S A DAY FOR COFFEE CIGARETTES CHATTERING CHATTERING MOVING SLOWLY TOWARD THE CHAMPS-ELYSEES WHICH IS LIT THANK CHRIST TO THE TEETH AND SLEEP IN MY ROOM SHE LEAVES AND I DON'T SEE HER FOR A MONTH

I SHOOT PART TWO JEZEBEL CHRISTMAS DAY AND NIGHT POUR ME DISTRAIRE TOUT SIMPLEMENT RUE SAINT-

DENIS AND MONTMARTRE LE MOULIN ROUGE THE SEX TRADE MY LADY IN FURS STOCKINGS BLACK LACE GLITZ NEON I'M DRESSED LIKE A CLOCHARD IT'S A SECRET RUN AND THE BOLEX IS LEASHED TO MY WRIST WITH SILK AND WEIGHS A TON SHOOTING TWELVE HOURS FOR AN ALL NIGHTER IN MONTMARTRE CHANGING FRANCS TO FLORINS ON THE WAY TO GRAB THE SEVEN FIFTY-EIGHT TO AMSTERDAM LAUGHING THROUGH ROTTERDAM GOT THERE AND LOST CONTROL

AMSTERDAM IS THE ONLY HARBOUR LEFT IN THE WORLD

JANUARY THE MONEY IS ALMOST GONE I'M GIVING ENGLISH LESSONS FOLLOWING A LESSON BOOK FIRST TWO STUDENTS THEN THREE FOUR I'M LIVING IN PARIS MAKING FOUR HUNDRED FRANCS A WEEK MAYBE I SWITCH TO CHEAP FRENCH CIGARETTES CLOTHES ARE WEARING OUT BOOTS ARE WEARING OUT NOT EATING SO WELL BUT SOME STUDENTS ARE FEEDING ME GENEROUSLY AND THERE'S TALK OF WORKING AT LIGHT CONE

THE SCREENING AT SCRATCH OF THE FILMS I BROUGHT OVER GOES WELL IF QUIETLY SOME FRIENDS ARE THERE FROM THE SORBONNE MY LOVELY PROF EVEN AND A GUY BEHIND PIETER AND I CAN'T HANDLE THE EVENING HE'S WAITING FOR A LONG QUIET SHOT OF SOMETHING AND WITH EACH FILM ASKS ME IF I MADE IT AND HUFFS AND GRUNTS THEN SAYS "BOFI MAIS QU'EST-CE QUE CELA REPRESENT" HE LIKES THE PORNOGRAPHY THAT COMES UP IN name your poison ... LATER IN MY POCKETS I REALIZE THAT YANN AND MILES HAVE DEFERRED THEIR THIRTY-THREE PERCENT BECAUSE THEY KNOW I'M HURTING

I'M HURTING I'M JUMPING THE METRO NOW GETTING CAUGHT FEIGNING CONFUSION I'M WORKING SIX STUDENTS I'M IN SPRAWLING APARTMENTS STUDIOS DEPRESSING ROOMS WITH AGING SINGLE WOMEN LIGHT CONE MOVES INTO AN OFFICE IN THE TWELFTH AND WE ALL AWAIT THE MACINTOSH TO BEGIN WORK ON THE NEW CATALOGUE I'M ROLLING MY CIGARETTES WONDERING ABOUT IT

ONE NIGHT AFTER SCRATCH IN THE METRO I SEE ROSE LOWDER I CHAT HER UP LOOKING TO HELP HER IN AVIGNON AT HER "ARCHIVES DU FILM EXPERIMENTAL D'AVIGNON" THE TRAIN COMES I FOLLOW HER ON AND WE KEEP TALKING SHE'S TELLING ME IT'S HARDER THAN I THINK NO SHIT SHE TRANSFERS TO ANOTHER TRAIN AND I FOLLOW HER SHE TELLS ME THAT A LONG TIME AGO BRUCE ELDER CAME TO AVIGNON WITH HIS WIFE AND FILMS AND WAITED OUTSIDE HER PLACE I TELL HER I CAN DO ANYTHING SHE TELLS ME TO RELAX I'LL SOON BE HELPING LIGHT CONE MEANWHILE WE'RE HALFWAY ACROSS PARIS I LEAVE HER ON THE ESCALATOR AT BASTILLE AND HEAD BACK TO THE EIGHTH

LEAVING THE THEATRE

JO SILK COMES TO PARIS AND HE AND I AND DIMITRI MEET AT BEAUBOURG I HAVE A FEELING IT WON'T GO DIMITRI TALKS TOO FAST JO IS COMPLETELY ERRATIC NOTHING WILL GELL THE NEXT DAY I'M WITH JO SILK AND HE'S RIPPING THINGS OFF TALKING CONFUSION ANGER FRUSTRATION CROSSING THE AVENUES TO SEE WHAT PAINTERS ARE PAINTING PICKING UP PIECES OF PAPER AT GARE DU NORD HE'S NOT SURE IF HE'LL GO TO LILLE OR BACK TO BONN HE GOES TO BUY A TICKET FOR SOMEWHERE I SAY AU REVOIR GOOD BYE SALUT SALUT BON COURAGE

FRANCOIS DISCHINGER A FASHION PHOTOGRAPHER FROM TORONTO WE WERE IN THE SAME WAREHOUSE OFF AND ON I MEET HIM PAR HASARD IN A PATISSERIE BY MY PLACE HE WAS IN MADRID AND BARCELONA SHOOTING AND NOW IN PARIS LIVING ONE STREET OVER I DIE AND HE SAVES MY LIFE WITH ONE-LINERS AND WE'RE LAUGHING LIKE FOOLS BECAUSE HE'S A

GENIUS WATCHING PEOPLE I BRING HIM TO "LA ROSE DE SOUSSE" FOR COUSCOUS AND RUE SAINT-DENIS WE'RE ON THIS SIDE OF BEING BROKE WORKING THE MARGIN I GIVE HIM SCOTCH BECAUSE HIS TEETH HURT AND HE TILTS HIS HEAD TO GET IT RIGHT AND WE KNOW DARWIN WOULDN'T CALL HIM AN IDIOT AFTER SIX WEEKS HE'S STARTING TO GET WORK IN PARIS

THE MAC ARRIVES ENFINI AT LIGHT CONE AND I'M INPUTTING FOR THE CATALOGUE THE WORK BEGINS PAGES BOOKS CATALOGUES PROGRAMMES REVIEWS NOTICES ADS LETTERS

«Je n'aime pas voir dans les films ce qui se passe dans la vie. Les films qui s'attachent à reproduire la vie, je les appelle des films en trou de serrure . . .

J'aimerais voir dans un film quelque chose que je n'ai jamais vu, que je ne comprends pas.»

— Man Ray

THEY'RE ALL PREY AS THEY LAY DOWN THEIR TEXT UNDER MY FINGERS THE PLACE IS HOPPING WITH YANN AT THE DESK AT THE PHONE AND EVERYWHERE AND MILES SHOOTING FILM STILLS OVERSEEING THE CATALOGUE KEEPING UP WITH THE PLANTS THE BOYS FIGURE EVERYTHING OUT ODILE IS IN THE SHELVES AND JEAN-PAUL DUPUIS OF COLLECTIF JEUNE CINEMA

IS IN THE BASEMENT SURROUNDED BY MACHINES SO HE COMES UP TO LOOK AT THE NEW WALL AND PRO-
NOUNCES IT SCANDALEUX C'EST SCANDALEUX I'M ALONE TYPING A LOT LOVING IT LOVING THE RE-
SOURCES STORIES PROPAGANDA STATEMENTS DIA-
TRIBE LOST AND HAPPY ECCENTRICS BLOCKED UP
PROLIFIC AND SPARSE GOOD WRITING DENSE ELITIST
BAD PEU IMPORT IT'S ALL MINE TO STRIKE AND CON-
SIDER FILLING THE VOLATILE MEMORY LITTLE MOUSE
SPINNING AND CLICKING FIRING ARROWS ACROSS THE
SCREEN THE BOYS TRACKED THE RIGHTS TO FISCHIN-
GER'S wax experiments FOR TWO YEARS LEN LYE'S FILMS
CAME BY WAY OF LUCK AND TIMING THEIR MOHOLY-
NAGY PRINTS ARE PRISTINE AS ARE DEREN'S AND RICH-
TER'S AND EGGELING'S THE BASTILLE IN PARTICULAR
AND PARIS ALL OVER IS A BREEDING GROUND FOR
FILMMAKERS THEY COME IN WITH THEIR CANS SPOOLS
CORES I STARTED SEEING THE FILMS I HAD BEEN
TYPING

I SHOOT PART THREE shiva AT CIMETIERE PERE-
LACHAISE FRANCOIS ASSISTS THROWING A THOUSAND
PIECES OF SILK IN AMONGST THE GRAVESTONES AND
SEFULCHERS A LADY SAYS "VOUS FAITES DES FAN-
TOMES" OUI MADAME MERCI C'EST CA I READ "JE NE
SUIS PAS NEE POUR ETRE MORTE" I READ "TU ES
MORTE VIERGE" I READ "CONCESSION A PERPETUITE" A
WOMAN IS STRICKEN AND STUMBLES TOWARD US
WEEPING WE PAUSE ALL AROUND ARE CATS OLD
STONE OLD IRON DEATH ICON PUNGENT RELIGION IT'S
ALL MOVING WELL AND BANG BOLEX BREAKDOWN AND
WE'RE LEFT FOR DEAD DEEP IN THE TWENTIETH AT AN
EDITH PIAF CAFE THE HOOKERS GO FOR FRANCOIS
NIGHTS PASS THEN BEAULIEAU BREAKTHROUGH
RENTED SALVATION FILM COMPLETED AND RUSHED TO
THE LAB HEH HEH GOT IT OUT THE AFTERNOON OF THE
staccato SCREENING AT SCRATCH WITH NOT ENOUGH
TIME TO SEE THE FINAL INSTALLMENT I'M AT LIGHT
CONE YANN'S WINDING IT ONTO THE BIG REEL WE'RE
LOOKING AT THE THING BUT NO ONE SEES IT PRO-
JECTED UNTIL THAT NIGHT AT SCRATCH DIMITRI IS
THERE FROM THE EARLIER SHOW HE STAYS HE TELLS
ME ABOUT THE MONTREAL FESTIVAL SAYS HE'S JUST
BACK FROM CANNES THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND HE'S
UP THERE FRONT AND CENTRE AND ITS A GOOD NIGHT
AT SCRATCH I HAVE INADVERTENTLY INVITED EIGHTEEN
PEOPLE I'M A BIT FREAKED BUT THE FILMS ARE GOOD
ALL NIGHT AND THE IDEA OF SEEING shiva FOR THE
FIRST TIME IN THE CINEMA GIVES ME A STRANGE THRILL
IT GOES OVER WELL AND FRANCOIS AND I HEAD BACK
TOWARDS THE EIGHTH WE'RE EXHAUSTED BUT WE
STOP FOR COFFEES AND TALK AN HOUR

KIP SPIDELL COMES TO PARIS FOR TEN DAYS OF A
THREE MONTH SPIN THROUGH EUROPE NORTH AFRICA
AND PARTS OF RUSSIA HE BRINGS HIS BOLEX AND WE
IMMEDIATELY COMPARE CAMERAS TALK CAMERAS AND
TALK MOVIES A BOTTLE OF WINE AT THE EIFFEL TOWER
AT MIDNIGHT AND HE RETURNS TO SHOOT THREE

LEAVING THE THEATRE

ROLLS LIT UP IN GOLD THE TOWER IS A BEAUTY THEN CATASTROPHY AT CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU TRYING TO SEE SNOW'S la region centrale AS THE BIMBO IN THE BOX HAS HER WIRES CROSSED AND CAN'T FIGURE OUT HOW TO SELL US TICKETS WE'RE NOW FIFTEEN MINUTES LATE I TELL HER HOW TO DO IT WHAT WE NEED WHERE WE'RE GOING BUT ITS HOPELESS WE LEAVE I RETURN TO BLAST HER AND IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE BLOWN UP AT A PARISIAN BUT IT WORKS CALMED DOWN BY AUTHORITY AND AN OFFER TO GO IN GRATUIT SO WE FIGURE WHAT THE HELL WE'LL BE THERE FOR THREE AND A HALF HOURS LATER WE'RE ON A TRAIN TO MONS IN BELGIUM BECAUSE carl e. lafong WAS ACCEPTED INTO A SORT OF FILM AND MONKEY FESTIVAL GOOD TIME IN MONS BUT THE FESTIVAL IS A

SHORT WAVE SIGNALS PLASTER ANGELS AND NUMBERS BUT WE'RE LAUGHING AND DRINKING AND WAITING HOPING FOR SOME DAMN THING TO BE SCREENED WE LEAVE WITH THE FILM SOME PROGRAMMES AN UNBELIEVABLY WEIRD POSTER AND TWO LEGENDARY IRON MONKEY PLATES BUT HARDLY ANY SCOTCH SO WE FINISH IT ON THE PLATFORM ON THE TRAIN I SEND KIP WITH FRANCS FRANCAIS AND FRANCS BELGES FOR MORE SCOTCH GET MORE AND I'M DONE I'M IN THE WASHROOM ON THE FLOOR TRYING TO GET ON TOP OF IT AND COOL DOWN AND PARIS IS ONE AND A HALF HOURS AWAY KIP IS FINE THOUGH AND WE MAKE IT

THE END OF APRIL AND I AM ALMOST BROKE I FIGURE I'LL GO TO AMSTERDAM AND WORK IT OUT BUT ONE MORNING AT LIGHT CONE MILES TURNED ME ONTO A SUBTITLING JOB FRENCH TO ENGLISH FOR AN AFRICAN FEATURE CALLED yaaba BY IDRISSE OUEDRAOGO I THOUGHT OK I'LL DO ANOTHER MONTH I'LL MAKE SOME FRANCS I'LL FIX MY CAMERA AND ROLL THE JOB WAS A DREAM LOTS OF MONEY FROM THE SWISS PRODUCER MILES OFFERED ADVICE HE WORKS LIKE THIS OFTEN I HAD PEANUTS WALKING INTO THE OFFICE NEAR REPUBLIQUE THOUSANDS WALKING OUT THE FILM COMES FROM BURKINA FASO BY COINCIDENCE MY NEIGHBOUR RAMATA CHEZ THE MAD COUNTESS COMES FROM BURKINA FASO I TAKE HER TO THE PRIVATE SCREENING SHE KNOWS THE DIRECTOR SMALL THIRD WORLD SO WE DRESS UP AND HEAD FOR TERRACE MARTINI ON THE CHAMPS-ELYSEES AND ITS NUTS ITS LOUSY WITH LEATHER JEWELS SUNTANS DRINKS FOOD AND THE WORD ON EVERYONE'S LIPS IS CANNES CANNES CANNES WE DO THE FILM I'M USING A PENLIGHT TO CHECK MY SCRIPT WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE SCREEN MAKING NOTES I'M NOT BIG ON THE FILM BUT I FIGURE HE'S MADE A FEATURE OR TWO SHUT UP I PRODUCE THE FINISHED DIALOGUE FOUR DAYS LATER GO THROUGH ONE REVISION MEET PIERRE-ALAIN AND IDRISSE OUTSIDE GARE DE LYON FOR BEER AND SUN SHAKE HANDS WISH THEM LUCK PIERRE-ALAIN SAYS KEEP IN TOUCH THERE'S FIVE OR SIX FILMS A YEAR TO DO

MILES IS AT THE GARE HE'S GOING TO LIEGE IN BELGIUM TO TEAR DOWN HIS WORK MILES IS A SCULPTOR WE TALK WE KISS HE LEAVES I LEAVE I'M TIRED WEARY I NEED TO STOP BUT I'M MEETING MY FRIEND JIM JEFFS IN AMSTERDAM FOR A ONE-MONTH TOUR THROUGH GERMANY ITALY FRANCE BELGIUM HOLLAND WHAT-EVER GETS CLOSE TO THE NISSAN WE'RE LIVING IN A RED NISSAN LICENCE XG-18-PG AND WE DO IT ALL FOR 6300 KILOMETRES I'S NOT SHOOTING RIGHT AWAY THERE'S ENOUGH TO GET ONTO WORKING GERMAN VERBS IN MY NOTE BOOK MOVING SOUTH WEST NOW THROUGH GERMANY WE SHOOT A MAP ANIMATION IN THE ROOM IN ITALY ONE MORNING WAKING UP IN THE NISSAN IT'S ALWAYS SEVEN-THIRTY HE HANDS ME THE CAMERA HE SAYS "HERE SHOOT THIS" AND DRIVES US

Waar leide kaart te gebruiken?

- in bus, tram en metro of het stads- en streekvervoer in heel Nederland.
- in trein (2e klas)
- binnen het streekvervoergebied van Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag en Utrecht met toestemming in het desbetreffende gebied, op de trajecten:
 - Groningen - Delfzijl / Roodschol.
 - Zwolle - Kampen, als deel van een 5 zones reis.
 - Zoetermeerlijn.

Tarief.
Per reis geldt één strip, maar kansteeds nog één dan hetzelfde zone. Overstappen is toegestaan. Meestals 12 strepen.

Geldigheidsduur vanaf stempeldag:

| | | | | |
|----------|--------------|---------|----------|-----------|
| 2 str. | 4 strepen: | 1 uur | 1 str. | 2 zone: |
| 5 str. | 7 strepen: | 1½ uur | 4 str. | 3 zone: |
| 8 str. | 10 strepen: | 2 uur | 7 str. | 4 zone: |
| 11 str. | 13 strepen: | 3 uur | 10 str. | 5 zone: |
| 14 str. | 16 strepen: | 4 uur | 13 str. | 6 zone: |
| 17 str. | 19 strepen: | 5 uur | 16 str. | 7 zone: |
| 20 str. | 22 strepen: | 6 uur | 19 str. | 8 zone: |
| 23 str. | 25 strepen: | 7 uur | 22 str. | 9 zone: |
| 26 str. | 28 strepen: | 8 uur | 25 str. | 10 zone: |
| 29 str. | 31 strepen: | 9 uur | 28 str. | 11 zone: |
| 32 str. | 34 strepen: | 10 uur | 31 str. | 12 zone: |
| 35 str. | 37 strepen: | 11 uur | 34 str. | 13 zone: |
| 38 str. | 40 strepen: | 12 uur | 37 str. | 14 zone: |
| 41 str. | 43 strepen: | 13 uur | 40 str. | 15 zone: |
| 44 str. | 46 strepen: | 14 uur | 43 str. | 16 zone: |
| 47 str. | 49 strepen: | 15 uur | 46 str. | 17 zone: |
| 50 str. | 52 strepen: | 16 uur | 49 str. | 18 zone: |
| 53 str. | 55 strepen: | 17 uur | 52 str. | 19 zone: |
| 56 str. | 58 strepen: | 18 uur | 55 str. | 20 zone: |
| 59 str. | 61 strepen: | 19 uur | 58 str. | 21 zone: |
| 62 str. | 64 strepen: | 20 uur | 61 str. | 22 zone: |
| 65 str. | 67 strepen: | 21 uur | 64 str. | 23 zone: |
| 68 str. | 70 strepen: | 22 uur | 67 str. | 24 zone: |
| 71 str. | 73 strepen: | 23 uur | 70 str. | 25 zone: |
| 74 str. | 76 strepen: | 24 uur | 73 str. | 26 zone: |
| 77 str. | 79 strepen: | 25 uur | 76 str. | 27 zone: |
| 80 str. | 82 strepen: | 26 uur | 79 str. | 28 zone: |
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TO BREAKFAST RIPPING PAST THE ROCK FACE IN THE
MOUNTAINS FOCUSING WAKING UP DUCKING I'M HANG-
ING OUT THE WINDOW FOR DAYS SHOOTING I SPREAD
FIVE ROLLS OVER THE MONTH FRAME BY FRAME
FALLING INTO LONGER PATTERNS PEOPLE WINDOWS
POWER LINES HIGHWAY SIGNS ONE PHOTOGRAMME OF
EVERYTHING IN THE OFFIZZI IN FLORENCE

A MONTH CRASHES THROUGH THE PASSPORT JIM IS GLAD TO GET BACK TO WINDSOR I'M GLAD TO STOP IN ONE PLACE TO STOP IN AMSTERDAM INTO THE RED LIGHT FOR A LARGE TOP FLOOR ROOM I FIGURE IT'S DELUXE AND I FLOP FOR FOUR DAYS SPREAD THINGS OUT LIVE IT UP WHAT THE HELL AND START A TWO MONTH RUN THROUGH HOLLAND HEADING NORTH ALONG THE COAST I'M LIVING ON HERRING AND MARS BARS AND SWEARING A LOT LEARNING DUTCH QUICKLY I TAKE NO SHIT AND RESPOND TO CAT CALLS IN IT'S OWN TONGUE

GRONINGEN AND I KISS EACH OTHER OFF I ASK IF
THERE'S A HOTEL NEAR ZURICH TOP OF THE DIKE NO
ONE KNOWS I GO ANYWAY AND IT'S A PIECE OF CAKE
"ZIMMER FREI" I READ STEPPING DOWN I SHAVE BY THE
HIGHWAY AND HEAD INTO TOWN GET THE PLACE FOR
FOUR DAYS CRASH OUT COMPLETELY FOR ONE THEN
MARCH OUT TO THE DIKE IT'S TWO KILOMETRES THERE
AND I'M COMING COMPLETELY UNWOUND IT'S LOVELY
IT'S SUBLIME SI J'OSE DIRE THE WINDMILLS ARE HIGH-
EFFICIENT MODERN SWOOSHING SWOOSHING THE
LAND IS SCULPTED BY WIND AND WATER AND I'M
STANDING ON THIRTY KILOMETRES OF INGENUITY I'M
SHOOTING mondrian voor rebecca I'M SHOOTING HORI-
ZONS WATER STONE I'M BUILDING GRIDS WORKING
WITH COLOUR FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS MY NOTES
ARE GOOD BUT NOT PERFECT AND WHEN I RUN INTO
TROUBLE I WAIT A FEW MINUTES THEN MOVE ON THE
IDEA I COULD ONLY AFFORD ONE ROLL OF FILM GOT IT
IN UTRECHT EH KIP BUT IT TAKES TWO DAYS TO SHOOT
NOT FRAME BY FRAME BUT BURSTS BURSTS BURSTS
GELLING THE LENS TURNING THE CAMERA IN GRIDS
SQUARES I'M SWEATING AND LADY BUGS ARE SWARM-
ING ME IN THE VIEWFINDER NOW IS A LADYBUG JETS
BLAST OVERHEAD THEN NOTHING BUT THE SWOOSHING
WINDMILLS AND THE FINE CUT OF THE LAND I LEAVE
THE PAINT FOR THE TITLE SEQUENCE ON THE ROCKS
AND BUILD A SMALL TOTEM AROUND IT FOR REBECCA
AT TIMES STRETCHING OUT ON THE ROCK COMING
COMPLETELY UNWOUND NOT THINKING

I ARRIVE IN PARIS RESIGNED AND YANN AND MILES OFFER MORE WORK MORE CATALOGUE ACTION WHICH IS NOW AT AN ADVANCED STAGE WITH CORRECTIONS ADDITIONS CODING TO DO AND AGAIN THEY SAVE MY SKIN WITH A FEW FRANCS AND THEIR APARTMENT AS THEY'RE OFF TO LONDON FOR A SHOW AND A ROMP I SPEND TEN DAYS THERE AT RUE DE LAPPE FRANCOIS AND I GET IT TOGETHER AGAIN AND IT'S NICE AND

SANDRA COMES OVER AND WE START WRECKING ROOMS AND WE WRECKED ROOMS FOR THE NEXT WEEK AND THERE WERE JEWELS AND WHEN THE BOYS



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N I P E S H M B N
S X R R S X M B S



GOT BACK I REQUESTED ONE LAST SCREENING FILMS THAT I HADN'T SEEN SOME OF YANN'S AND SOME FROM MILES AND MOSTLY FROM CINEMA'S BEGINNINGS

MUCH HAS BEEN LEFT UNTOLD

WORKING TRANSLATING GUY DEBORD OF INTERNATIONAL SITUATIONNISTE OF la societe du spectacle FOR YANN'S FILM spetsai WAS A THRILL PARTICULARLY BECAUSE THE SHOW OF THE INTERNATIONALE SITUATIONNISTE I SAW AT CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU LEFT ME SPEECHLESS SHIVERING JUSTIFIED I DID WHAT I COULD WITH THE TEXT WHICH SEEMED TO WORK THEN RECORDED VOICE WITH MARTINE ROUSSET IT WAS NICE TO DO SOMETHING FOR YANN FOR A CHANGE

THE WORD "JAMAIS"

THE WORDS "SACHEZ QUE VOUS ME MANQUE"

KIP ASKED ME TWO WEEKS AGO WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE BACK HOW'S IT GOING AND STUFF AND I SAID SOMETIMES IT'S A TOUGH CALL SOMETIMES THERE ARE BIG ECHOES BUT MOSTLY THERE ARE MORE STORIES THAN THERE IS TIME TO TELL BUT I LISTEN ANYWAY

STAFF CHANGES

There have been a number of staff changes at CFMDC in the last few months, as well as a shift in structure toward a non-hierarchical, collective model.

Ross Turnbull, Gillian Morton and Tom Thibault have left to pursue other interests.

Paul Couillard has become the Administrator for the centre, a new job that replaces the position of Director. A video, performance and installation artist, Paul has several years of experience as a coordinator and director of artist-run spaces in Ottawa, including GALLERY 101 and SAW.

James MacSwain, our new Education Film Officer, describes himself as "yet another Maritimer in exile". A media artist working in film, video and photography, Jim has been involved with many artist-run organizations, including the ATLANTIC FILM MAKERS CO-OP, ATLANTIC INDEPENDENT MEDIA and the CENTRE FOR ART TAPES.

Our new Booker/Technician is **Barbara Goslawski**, who comes to CFMDC after having worked in a similar capacity at DEC here in Toronto.

MEDIA LITERACY PROJECT

As announced in the last issue of the Eye, **Krista Grevstad** has been working since August on a media literacy project with Ontario high schools. She has already conducted a number of extremely successful workshops since the school year began, exposing students and teachers to the films, concerns and approaches of independent Canadian filmmakers. The initial success of the project suggests that high schools are anxious

to find expertise in the area of media literacy, which is now mandatory curriculum. They are also very receptive to independent Canadian work. Krista notes that a number of schools have expressed interest in visits and workshops by filmmakers, which can often be partially subsidized through programs like the OAC'S CREATIVE ARTISTS IN THE SCHOOLS. All school boards have some kind of budget for workshops and visits; interested filmmakers should contact Krista at the Centre.

FILMMAKERS NOT ARTISTS?

The recent opening at the NATIONAL GALLERY of the first of five Biennials celebrating contemporary Canadian art failed to include any film artists, although some work used video in the context of installation work. According to curator **Diana Nemiroff**, film and video artists were not specifically excluded from consideration, though her own area of expertise (which does not include film or video) was reflected in the curatorial choices. After a meeting with V/TAPE to discuss omissions we commissioned **Ross Turnbull** (former director) to go to Ottawa. There, we arranged a meeting with Ross and the curators from the five Biennials - which will take place every two years through the 1990s in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Ross presented arguments on behalf of the independent film and video community and was generally well received, in spite of, or because of their familiarity with the arguments. Representation of film and video artists is particularly important because taken altogether, the Biennials are meant to provide an overview

of ten years of contemporary Canadian art practice. Inclusion in the Biennials would provide legitimization not just for the individual artists represented but also for the media they choose to work in. To be excluded, on the other hand, is to be written out of the official history. Film and video artists have fought hard against institutional reluctance to have their work collected and exhibited by major galleries. We will be watching closely to see whether our concerns are addressed in the next Biennial.

SPACE CONSIDERATIONS

As rental costs in Toronto continue to skyrocket, the CFMDC is one of several arts groups exploring the possibility of purchasing a building to ensure our future in Toronto. We are currently working with a number of other groups - including LIFT, TRINITY SQUARE VIDEO, NORTHERN VISIONS AND INTER/ACCESS - to determine the feasibility of such a move. One bright spot on the horizon is the possible establishment of an endowment fund at the Municipal level that could be used to help secure mortgages at a reasonable interest rate. Money for the fund would come from the proceeds of the city's sale of the Langstaff Jailfarm. Meetings concerning possible uses of the Langstaff funds have been going on since the beginning of the summer; a proposal to CITY COUNCIL is expected early in the new year.

CLARIFICATION OF AGM REPORT

Following the publication of the Director's Report from our June AGM, **David Craig**, Film,

Photography and Video Officer for the ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL, wrote to clarify the nature of the OAC's grant to the Centre. He points out that the funding the OAC provided to the Centre was for programs rather than operations. The misunderstanding was the result of a clerical error at the OAC when the letter confirming the grant was drawn up. The CFMDC receives its operational funding at the provincial level from the MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS as a service organization.

CLEANING/INSPECTION MACHINE

An announcement about our new cleaning/inspection machine in the last issue of the Eye neglected to mention that the purchase was made possible in part through a \$5,000 grant from the ONTARIO MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS. We gratefully acknowledge their support.

CATALOGUE SUPPLEMENT

The SUPPLEMENT TO THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE OF THE CATALOGUE is ready at last. If you haven't got yours already, you can get one by calling or writing to the Centre.

WE REMEMBER

Michael McGarry, maker of *In Black and White*, died recently in Vancouver. He was 35. **Jack Smith**, a New York filmmaker and performance artist, died of AIDS in September. He was 57. They will be sorely missed.

LEAVING THE THEATRE

THE INDEPENDENT EYE

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*FRONT COVER PHOTO: Marianna Ebbers performing in
Phillip Barker's Trust A Boat.*

BACK COVER PHOTO: artwork by Carl Brown

